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THE OPEN LIGHT

THE CHRISTIAN REVOLUTION SERIES
VOLUME IV.

THE OPEN LIGHT

An Enquiry into Faith and Reality

BY

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WITH FOREWORD BY

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Quod superest, vacuas auris (animumque sagacem)
Semotum a curis adhibe veram ad rationem,
Ne mea dona tibi studio disposta fidei,
Intellecta prius quam sint, contempta relinquas.

Lucretius. *Oxford text.*

Benignus est Spiritus sapientiae, et non consuevit esse difficilis se
invocantibus, qui saepe, et antequam invocetur, dicit, Ecce adsum.

Bernard. in Cant. XV. I.

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TO
MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER
THROUGH WHOM
MORE THAN BY ALL THESE ARGUMENTS
I HAVE LOOKED INTO
THE HEAVENLY MYSTERIES.

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FOREWORD

I CAN most heartily commend what Mr. Micklem has written in these pages to all who concern themselves with the great problems with which he is dealing. There are few men who know the student mind more intimately than he does, or are better able to meet its requirements, and win its sympathies. He has written with admirable candour, neither indulging in any special pleading nor ignoring any serious difficulty ; and though he would be the last to claim to understand all mysteries, he helps the bewildered to see that there is a way in which they may walk without doing violence to reason, which is none the less the way of wisdom and duty because it is the way of faith, and which bids fair, if they follow it, to lead them into the realm of light and peace. Any who, because of the uncertainties and denials of this perilous time,

are tempted to give up everything in despair may, I think, take heart again when they see how others have faced the spectres of the mind, and have not been daunted or dismayed. Mr. Micklem has rendered an important service by the publication of this little book, and I am sure many will be grateful for what he has said and done.

H. ARNOLD THOMAS.

PREFACE

THE writer of "The New Parent's Assistant" calls for a book for which he provides alternative alluring titles; " 'First Steps in Philosophy,' 'Metaphysics Made Easy,' 'Logic for the Little Ones,' 'The Nursery Theologian,' 'The Boys' Own Berkeley,'" I can make no claim to have written such a book; yet this may at least appear as a specimen of that Socratic art which also is said to be connected with the nursery.

There are many who have an instinct or intuition that in Christianity, though hidden and overlaid, there lies the fulfilment of man's need and the answer of his questionings. I hope that this book, which may be regarded as in some sense an open letter to such, may help to make Christianity appear both more reasonable and more beautiful.

I am grateful to the friends who have helped me with my work; to the Rev.

Fearon Halliday, M.A., whose book on "Reconciliation and Réality" lies behind much that I have written, and who has helped me over many stiles; to the Rev. Herbert Morgan, M.A., both for his assistance while the book was being written and for the advantage of his wisdom imparted to me in many conversations during those happy days in Bristol when we carried it very familiarly towards one another under a common roof; to the Rev. H. Arnold Thomas, M.A., LL.D., *maestro mio*, both for his kindness in writing a foreword for me and for the immeasurable privilege of his guidance and companionship during the earliest days of my ministry.

My debt to Professor James Ward will be apparent to all who know his great book on "The Realm of Ends."

The Epilogue has been written at the last moment at the suggestion of the Rev. the Principal of Mansfield, D.D.

My wife has helped me from first to last in big things and in little.

I should perhaps add that this book has been advertised under a different title from

that which now it bears. The alteration is due to a friend's kindly warning that the title I had chosen is the property of another. The present title may need a word of explanation. It is taken from that poem of William Morris, in which he speaks of the problems of to-day as a "tangled wood," until they are seen in the light of life's meaning as a whole, and

"looking up, at last we see
The glimmer of the open light,
From o'er the place where we would be :
Then grow the very brambles bright.

I have even hoped that this little book might for some wayfarer be "as the glimmer of the open light" upon the way.

N.M.

MANSFIELD COLLEGE,

April, 1910.

I MATTER AND SPIRIT.

This made me present evermore
 With whatsoe'er I saw.
An object, if it were before
My eye, was by Dame Nature's law,
 Within my soul Her store
Was all at once within me ; all her treasures
Were my immediate and internal pleasures,
Substantial joys, which did inform my mind.
 With all she wrought
My soul was fraught,
And every object in my heart a thought
 Begot, or was ; I could not tell,
 Whether the things did there
 Themselves appear,
Which in my spirit truly seem'd to dwell ;
 Or whether my conforming mind
 Were not even all that therein shin'd.
 THOMAS TRAHERNE.

The True Rationalism.

LIFE must have a meaning or at least an explanation, and man cannot but ask whence he came and whither he goes. He is set in the midst of mystery. He knows

 " long and weary days
Full of rebellious askings, for what end,
And by what power, without our own consent,
Caught in this snare of life we know not how,
We were placed here, to suffer and to sin,
To be in misery, and know not why."

Even when free for a while from the felt
oppression of pain and sin man is never

quit of the mystery of life, and well may take to himself the prayer of the Breton fishermen, "Help me, O God; my boat is so small and Thy ocean so wide." We are out upon the open sea through no choice of our own, and if we have no instinct of the way, no knowledge of the harbour, we but, "fluctuate without term or scope."

What must be our starting point if we would solve man's greatest, and indeed his only problem, the meaning of life itself? We have no option; we must start from ourselves and the world as we are conscious of it, and ask what we with our experience involve. We shall part company from the very beginning with some; these are they who decry the adequacy of Reason in the search and call in to their assistance a mysterious information about Divine and human things which transcends Reason, and is available to so-called Faith alone.* For there are those who suppose that to reason about religion and life is, if not, actually irreligious, at least futile. The mysterious dealings of God with the human soul, they urge, are in a realm too sacred and too exalted for intellectual inquiry; to ask questions is to doubt, and faith needs no credentials; in this high realm of faith logic is blind and

* It will be plain from the sequel that we are not denying revelation but only arbitrary channels of revelation, and such revelations as cannot be commended to Reason. All knowledge is strictly revelation.

argument misleading. Such persons either resolve religion into mere mystical emotion, or assert that all that we need to know has been revealed to us in Jesus Christ or in the Bible or in the Church or in the Vedas or in some other ark of truth, and our sole duty is gratefully and adoringly to believe the "revelation." Such an attitude is possible for some, but if we be of the inquiring or the sceptical sort, and will love the Lord our God with all our mind or not at all, we say to them, "We do not wish to question that you have the truth; we hope it may be so, for we are searchers after truth; but give us some reason which may justify us in accepting what you say." How are we to decide whether the Vedas or the Authorised Version or the Pope speak true, or none of these? Reason must decide. It is not here suggested that the human intellect is able to solve all problems in the Universe, that the human spirit can comprehend all the depths of God; but we are so made that we must demand a reason for the beliefs offered to us, and in this high quest for truth we dare accept nothing which does not commend itself to thought. As a matter of fact, every religion or philosophy that claims the assent of all mankind, be it Roman Catholicism or materialism or theosophy or Christian Science or any other, has its "apologetics." Such "apologetics"

implicitly allow that the appeal to Reason is legitimate, and as a matter of fact it never could be proven that certain elements in human life are beyond the domain of Reason, since the attempted proof would involve reasoning about them! Valid reasons cannot, from the nature of things, be given for distrusting Reason!

We shall assume therefore that which is the postulate or condition of all thinking, that Reason is sovereign, and that there can be no appeal beyond Reason; for by Reason every appeal must commend itself. We shall not minimise the place of emotion and of morality or right willing in the search for truth, but we assert at the outset as fundamental that what is not rational is not true; that what is beyond the sphere of Reason or thought is beyond the sphere of existence. We start then upon this quest for the meaning of life, not indeed without prejudices (how could we?) but as true philosophers or lovers of wisdom determined that not emotion nor prejudice nor fear shall lead us to give our assent to that which we do not believe to be *true*; now the true is the rational.

There is in the heart of man an instinctive cry for God. In this chapter then we shall enquire what need or what right have we to suppose that there is a God.

I

The Mystery of Matter.

Man is aware of persons and of things, of "matter" and of "spirit." Have these two, matter and spirit, co-existed from all eternity, or is one the ground of the other? If matter be the ground of spirit, plainly there can be no God. We will examine, then, the claim of materialism to give a rational account of the Universe.

Materialism is propounded by some as a doctrine, but it is familiar to us all as a spirit. Though it be in the philosophical schools a doctrine demonstrably false, we meet men and women to whom it seems the natural, and indeed inevitable, explanation of life and of the world, and we have occasion to wrestle with ourselves in those moods of the spirit, when we wonder whether after all religion is not but foolish self-deception; when we feel sure of the things that we can see and touch and measure and calculate, but "the spiritual world," as we call it, seems shadowy and unreal, "gilded emptiness, nothing between two dishes"; when we are like Cicero who tells us that looking up to Mount Olympus, where, as men once believed, is the home of the gods, he for his part could see nothing but ice and snow.

Has not religion a purely natural origin? Does it not arise out of primitive man's

emotions and illusions, his dreams, his sense of being haunted by ghosts, his belief that there are spirits in the rustling trees and within the bubbling spring? It may be so, though prehistoric psychology is a highly speculative subject. But even if it were so that with the dawn of modern science ghosts became either incredible or insipid, that no angel stirred the waters of Siloam, and

Dodona's oak swang lonely
Henceforth to the tempest only,

yet might religion be no mere illusion; for art arose from the rude and practical drawings of the savage upon bone, architecture from the primitive cave or rushy shelter, home life from the primitive instinct of sex, but, as we shall see later, it is not origins but purposes that explain the world.

A far more serious difficulty is the contention of the materialist that every motion of thought has a corresponding motion of the grey matter of the brain which is its cause; that if the brain be destroyed, the "personality" perishes too; that all psychical and mental phenomena may be explained in terms of modifications or motions of the material particles in the brain, and that consciousness is like the shadow cast by a cloud upon the water, it is but the shadow of a mist; the reality is matter. In some such form as this the materialist's arguments come to us. We may feel them to be

wrong, but we cannot claim that he shall share our feelings ; or it may be we have the disquieting thought that perhaps after all he is right, who knows ?

But first we will set the materialist to some cross-questioning. "Sir," we will say to him, "you are sure that matter is the key to explain life and consciousness and religion as well as Nature ; what then is this matter ?" To this question the honest materialist is bound to answer that he does not know ; or if he is an honest but unphilosophical materialist he will answer that all matter may be reduced to some primal particles ; perhaps he will call them electrons. "What are electrons," we ask. "Particles of electricity," he answers. "And what is electricity?" "A form of energy." But "particles of energy" is not a very hopeful definition ; it is too much like defining "things" as "energetic things." Or it may be he will speak of the ultimate, not as electrons, but as ether or something else ; the name does not matter much, so long as we remember that it is a name for the unknown. Material things are all round about us, yet there is no greater mystery than matter in the universe. We know in some small measure what it will *do*, but what it *is* we know not.

Further, the materialist finds himself upon the horns of this dilemma, either he must say that the history of the Universe is the

result of mere chance, that Nature is blind, that the following of night upon day, summer upon winter, is merely fortuitous and not necessary, that the exquisite shapes of the crystal, the colours of the sunset, are the result of a mere chance grouping of material particles, that all causation is an illusion, in a word that all the wonders and intricacies and beauties and orders of Nature are the outcome, not of Reason nor of purpose, but of sheer accident, of "raket chance and fortune blind," which as a matter of fact no materialist does maintain, and than which no theory could be more absurd—or else he must use such terms as "causation," "evolution," "natural selection," and "laws of Nature" to explain the world. But "causation" is an idea not a material thing, and "evolution" and "natural selection" involve purpose, and purpose is a term utterly without meaning except in reference to some mind or minds; there must be a purposer if there is a purpose, there must be a law-giver if there is a law. In allowing himself these words at all, the materialist is really explaining the world in terms of mind!

Again, what man looking at St. Paul's Cathedral would say "Why, it is only bricks and mortar and gilt!"? We are as sure as he who wrote "*Si monumentum requiris circumspice*" that "bricks and mortar and

gilt" is not an adequate account of St. Paul's. If the Moonlight Sonata of Beethoven were only a series of noises drawn from a piano, it would be in no way superior to the braying of an ass or the screeching of a siren. If a man were in reality only the chymical particles out of which his body is made, then there would be no real difference between Christ and Barabbas. But if we judge neither architecture nor music nor persons in this way, we cannot so interpret the Universe. The undifferentiated void, if there was ever such a thing, out of which the Universe came to be, might be a mere collection of particles, but to know this is not to understand the courses of the stars and the glories of Nature and the history of mankind, as little as to know the mind of the infant Plato is to understand the "Republic," or to know the alphabet is to be a poet. Materialism takes away all meaning from the higher values of life; it reduces deeds noble and deeds base, things lovely and things ugly, the first beginnings of art and the highest achievements of a Raphael or a Beethoven to a common dead level of material particles. This is assuredly the most preposterous way of looking at the universe; it does not explain our experience, it explains it away.

But further, the mystery of matter lies not so much in the problem of what it is, but in the contemplation of what it will do. The

story is told* of a blind girl who earned a precarious livelihood by needlework, and whose one delight and solace was in the Bible, which was to her the very Word of God, the bread of life. Her finger grew hard and numb through stitching ; she took a knife and pared off the hard skin, but now she could not stitch ; work she must, so in her despair she raised her Bible to her lips to give it one farewell kiss, when to her unutterable astonishment she found that with her sensitive lip she still could read ! But how mysterious is matter, if through the outermost cuticle of the skin in contact with certain markings on a piece of paper, a human being can be in touch with the thoughts of the great ones of the earth and even with God Himself ! Or consider again the "human face divine," the face of someone whose life and character we most admire. A physiologist may be able to tell us with much accuracy of what particles that face is composed, but that is a small part of the mystery ; how comes it that through the collocation and expression of those physical particles we can read the history of a lifetime, can see the whole lit up and transfigured by the spirit within, and can find in the depths of those eyes "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ?" The mystery of matter is that

* By Dr. John Pulsford, in "Quiet Hours," first series.

it expresses spirit ; it is unintelligible apart from its meaning. • The printed signs that form this sentence, like the embossed figures of the Brail script, are an insoluble mystery apart from their meaning ; these alphabets were created to express meaning. Nature likewise is a system of meanings, or it is an insoluble mystery ; we shall see more clearly later that the function of matter is to express meaning.

Further, “ matter ” and “ spirit ” are both mysteries ; but when we consider, we find that we know much more about spirit than about matter. We are conscious of being persons, or “ spirits ” to keep the old word ; but of matter, though we cannot positively affirm that it is nothing apart from consciousness, we do and can know nothing except in relation to consciousness or mind. This will be plain from a single illustration. I hold an apple in my hand ; let me describe it to you. It has colour and markings ; it is extended in space, of a certain shape ; it is solid, that is, it resists the pressure of my hand ; it has a not unpleasant scent and a flavour of its own ; if I drop it, I can hear it strike the ground. I could tell you a little of its past history, but that would not be to the point, for I want to ask you what is it in itself and apart from consciousness ? I have described to you the perceptible qualities of this apple,

but all these qualities are, as I say, perceptible, that is, relative to senses that perceive and a mind that appreciates. A sound that is inaudible is not a sound; an imperceptible colour is a contradiction in terms; and when I say that the apple is extended in space and of a certain shape, I am using language which is meaningless apart from a mind that is capable of appreciating what extension in space means. It means that to grasp the object the eye or finger, whether in fact or in imagination, must move from one point to another. An apple is a living thing, but what the "matter" is of which its body is composed we can give no account except in terms of what it can do, that is, of what sensations it can produce in us. What, apart from consciousness, is that matter which can give us sensations, if indeed it be anything, is not only unknown but unknowable; for if it were known it would not be apart from consciousness. Therefore matter is "x" the great unknowable. But an explanation of the Universe in terms of the unknowable is not helpful. ••

But, as a matter of fact, the materialist in attempting to give an *explanation* of the Universe at all overreaches himself; for explanation involves mind, and that which is apart from mind admits of no explanation. As reasons cannot be given for distrusting reason, so explanations cannot

be given of that which is out of relation to mind.

II

The so-called "Unity of Consciousness."

It is likely that we mislead ourselves by the form of our question, what is mind and what is matter. Man is a thinking and perceiving animal; we give the name mind to the thinking part, the name things to the objects of his thinking. But you cannot think without thinking of something, nor again, as we have seen, is it possible to explain or have any idea of things apart from their being objects of thought. Thus we cannot have mind without objects of thought, and the only objects to be explained are objects of *thought*. The Universe which has to be explained is one that consists of thinkers and the objects of their thinking, and in this Universe, either thinkers apart from their thoughts or thoughts apart from their thinkers are pure abstractions. The Universe to be explained is the Universe which is experienced; you cannot explain the objects which, *ex hypothesi*, are the objects of consciousness by asserting that consciousness is an illusion, nor can anything be explained that is not relative to mind. It is experience that has to be explained. Materialism assumes that the objects of thought have a knowable

existence apart from the thought whose objects they are, that you can explain the Self that experiences as an illusion of its own experience.

III

Is there one directing Mind?

In experience we are conscious of "things" and of other persons. A person is both a subject and an object, a subject to himself as the self that has experience and an object to others who are conscious of him. I shall suggest later that all objects are also in some sense subjects, but that need not concern us here.

It has been shown that it is meaningless to speak of things except as the objects of thought. Yet we are aware that this planet existed and was being moulded and shaped and prepared aeons before human life appeared upon it. From time to time there floats into the heavens, or at least into man's gaze, some unknown, hitherto unseen, star. It is, therefore, unreasonable to say that things cannot be except as the objects of *human* thought. In respect then of those tracts of the Universe beyond human ken, too far away to be reached by telescope, too minute to be visible through microscope, and of those ages of time before man was, we seem obliged to postulate some more

than human mind—the Supreme Mind we may call it or the thought of God.

It may here be objected that our argument will not quite bear the weight of its conclusion. For we might conceive the Universe before the arrival of man as existing for the minds of the living creatures that were there; this involves what I at least shall certainly not dispute, that from the very beginning there has been life and consciousness upon the scenes. Or the objection may take another form; it may be said that *prima facie* the Universe, as we know it, especially when we have regard to human history and civilisation reflects the interactivity of many minds rather than the one purpose of a single mind. Again, when we consider the principles of good and evil, love and hate, which *apparently* strive for the mastery in this world, we may legitimately ask whether the old multi-theistic views which ascribe Nature and History to the influence of diverse and discordant spirits, do not offer a more satisfactory account of things than what we term Monotheism. Now it is perfectly true that Reality, as we know it, includes a number of spirits, ourselves, our friends, the whole of humanity, even if there be no others. It is also true that unless we ourselves were conscious of initiating change in the world, we should never have the notion of a God

Who initiated the whole order, for that which has no parallel in our own experiences is beyond the scope of our thought. The world as we know it certainly shows a plurality of agents. We ask then, can one mind or spirit be the cause of another? If not it will be impossible to show that the Universe is ultimately the expression of one Spirit.

It must be said—contrary to traditional theology—that we derive our notion of causation through the experience of initiating change in a given order, and causation is never the creation of something out of nothing. Therefore we can strictly speak neither of the material Universe nor of mankind as being *caused* by God. At the same time, just because the world is an order, and mankind through the possession of a common rational life is a unity, we are bound to conclude that there is a Ground of the Universe, even though First Cause is a misleading term. Our problem then must take the form—is the Ground of the Universe personal? is the Universe a personal order? if so, does it express the purpose of *one* mind or the somewhat discordant purposes of many minds?

These questions will be further discussed in the third chapter. Here this must suffice. There are many actions performed instinctively, as we say, by the animals which serve an end far beyond the ken of the agent.

The bumble-bee has little thought that he is fertilising the clover when he goes on his honey-seeking rounds. History again is largely the story of how men have builded better than they knew, or at least have done deeds the significance of which was hidden from them. Thus Luther, in proclaiming afresh the high rights and privileges of man, as man in the sphere of religion had little idea that out of his doctrine there would spring a political revolution and the modern world of democracies. Yet so it has proved to be. In the same way it has been contended that the whole Universe is working out a purpose beyond its own apprehension, and that Nature and History are working out a purpose that is not present to the consciousness of any one person nor of all together, and that Evolution may be regarded as God's self-discovery. It should, however, be clear that it is illegitimate to speak of a purpose which is not the purpose of any conscious purposer; for it involves treating as an independent reality that which is a pure philosophical abstraction.

But may not the Universe be the outcome of many conscious purposes in collision? Two reasons which make this so-called pluralistic hypothesis more reasonable will be discussed in the third and fourth chapters, first the fact that the world as we know it includes many purposers, and second

the existence in the world of sin and pain and evil which it is hard to reconcile with the purpose of an all-good and all-powerful God. If it can be shown that human freedom and the existence of pain and sin are not inconsistent with the being of such a God, then the chief ground will be removed for doubting that the Universe is essentially the expression of a single purpose.

But, it may finally be said, what if the purpose behind the world be a fluctuating purpose? If that were so the Universe would not be rational; all reasoning about it would be futile, and man could give no explanation of himself. Such a theory is the suicide of thought.

Reason therefore brings us to postulate a Supreme Mind which is the Ground and Purposer of the Universe.

IV

Mind an Abstraction.

But the very form of our conclusion leads us further; for Mind is neuter; we say "a mind which," not "a mind who"; but a Purposer must be a Person. Mind and thought are cold and neutral words; a man is never a mere thinking machine; the mind is but the part or aptitude of a man whereby he thinks; it is something inconceivable and meaningless except in connection with a person. There

cannot be a nose apart from a face nor a flower apart from a root. For scientific purposes you can cut off a nose or pluck a flower, but the notion of a nose involves the notion of a face, and the notion of a flower involves the notion of a root. Similarly the notion of a mind involves the notion of a person whose mind it is ; for thought is an activity, and therefore involves an actor. In reality there is no such thing as thinking apart from willing and feeling ; to think about anything we need to fix our attention on it, that involves an effort of will ; nor can we think of anything without some sort of feeling, whether of pleasure or of pain or something between the two. By the abstraction of thought we separate these three, but in real experience they are an indissoluble unity. Therefore, when we say that the Universe exists for the mind of God, or is the object of the thought of God, we are obliged to admit that there is a Person and character of God. If the Universe is the thought of God, what kind of a thought is it—good or bad, ugly or beautiful ?

We are led to this point by other considerations arising out of what was said earlier. We have seen that Nature is to be interpreted in terms not of first beginnings, but of final ends ; she is, as it were, a yet unfinished symphony. Nature, according to accepted scientific canons, is to be interpreted in terms

of "law" or "evolution," that is in terms of purpose, the purpose of the great Purposer. Can we grasp His purpose? Can we share His mind? Can we co-operate with Him? What quality of mind is revealed in Nature? What kind of heart is it behind the world? What manner of Person is he who is the Ground of our being, and the Author of our destiny? We shall attempt an answer to these questions in the next chapter; here we close with a single consideration.

V

The Rational.

When we say that the world is a rational order, what do we mean by rational? An assertion is not rational if it involve a contradiction; thus it is not rational to speak of a purple education or a disinterested ink-pot. But in conduct an act is not rational which is not directed to the attainment of some good; thus we say that man has lost his reason or is out of his mind when his actions are purposeless. But the only thinkable object of a purpose is some end which is regarded as a good. When we assert that the Universe is rational, we mean thereby that the system of things is working to an end, that is, to the fulfillment of a purpose. We said above that the true is the rational.

We keep the term truth chiefly for rightness in thought ; rightness or truth in action we call morality ; we may now say therefore that the moral is the rational in the sphere of activity. We call the Universe a rational system because we conceive it to be working out a social order according to a plan. That which tends to the fulfilment of this plan or order is right in action ; such action is moral. All those actions which the conscience of man condemns as sinful will be found, on examination, to be the expression of selfishness, and to involve the preference of the apparent advantage of the self to the good of society ; sin is anti-social. Thus the moral is the rational.

In the same way we must say that the beautiful is the rational. Rightness in thought is truth ; in action morality ; in form beauty ; all these are modes of the rational. Therefore if the Universe, as we must suppose, is truly rational, the purpose behind it must be good, and the Framer of the Universe must be One whose character corresponds with His purpose.

II

MEANINGS

ἡ φρόνησις οὐκ ὁραται, δεινούς γὰρ ἂν παρέιχεν ἔρωτας
εἰ τοιούτον ἑαυτῆς ἑναργεῖς εἰδῶλον παρείχετο εἰς ὅψιν ἴον.
—PLATO.

Du den wir suchen auf so finsternen Wegen,
Mit forschenden Gedanken nicht erfassen,
Du hast Dein heilig Dunkel einst erlassen,
Und tratest sichtbar Deinem Volk entgegen.

It may be that the conclusion of the last chapter has left us rather breathless. This proof of the excellence of the Universe we feel to be too abstract and facile; such persuasion as it affords is quickly dissipated by a touch of toothache or a twinge of gout. We say also that it is but poor comfort to us to know that the ultimate purpose of the Universe is good; can it indeed be truly good if it be careless of the fate of those who perish before it can be attained? So far we have found but little ground for personal religion, and although we have some abstract proof that the purpose of the Universe must be good, we have very little positive content for our notion of goodness. We do not know in any satisfactory way wherein the goodness of the purpose lies; it does not commend itself to our consciences, and therefore we do not fully believe it.

So far our proof has been wholly theoretical; that is to say, we have not looked at the Universe and said, "we can see this to be good and the work and purpose of a good God"; we have argued that we are bound to conceive the Universe as rational, and therefore it must be good, though we cannot see how it is.

In this chapter then we come down to earth, and admit that, though the human heart would fain believe that the Spirit behind the Universe is kind, that God is Fatherly, there is much that seems to contradict and make difficult this faith.

Can we then prove the goodness of God from the Universe of which he is the Author and the Ground?

To this we must reply that it depends upon what we will regard as satisfactory proof.

Assurance and Proof.

According as is the subject matter of the proposition, so must be its proof. Logical demonstration is but rarely possible; yet as a matter of fact men have great certainty upon many matters where strict proof is wanting. When we have followed the argument by which Euclid seeks to demonstrate his contention that the angles at the base

of an (isocles triangle are equal, and if the equal sides be produced the exterior angles are also equal, we are satisfied ; for we see that it *must* be so. Again, there are some certainties that are self-evident and require no demonstration. No proof can be offered that seven plus three is ten ; we see that it must be so, and there is no more to be said. Similarly, when I affirm, "all men are mortal ; Socrates is a man ; therefore Socrates is mortal," we see that if the premises are true the conclusion necessarily follows. That the Universe expresses the purpose of an all-good God is not a self-evident proposition ; it cannot be demonstrated as the conclusion of any syllogism the premises of which are certain, nor of any such reasoning as Euclid's. If we ask for that sort of proof we are asking for the impossible, our demand is illegitimate.

But there are other sorts of knowledge or so-called knowledge open to man, and we must consider these. Men claim to know that if you put your hand into the fire you will be burned, to know that there will be dawn to-morrow, that the Pleiades will set at such and such an hour ; the laws of Nature, say they, are immutable, and they are wont to contrast the certainties of the natural order with the supposed uncertainties of the spiritual order—if there be such. We must not be led here into a long argument about the laws of Nature, but I wish

to say frankly that I conceive myself to have far better reason for believing that the Universe is good than I have for believing that dawn will lighten to-morrow. Of course I shall set the alarm or arrange to be called, and make such needful preparation as I can against this contingency of to-morrow's dawn, but when I examine my mind to seek out the reasons for my expectations I find that I am far short of certainty. For one thing, I know so little about the Universe; out of the great abysses of space there might come one night a gigantic meteorite that would smash our little sun to smithereens, and then, I suppose, there would be no dawn for me. For all that scientists can know or be expected to know it may be of the nature of things that when the earth's surface cools to a certain temperature or is moulded to a certain shape, the surrounding atmosphere becomes opaque. These may seem very far-fetched notions, and so I daresay they are, but my point is that it is beyond the power of scientists to prove what must be; they can only show what is: and I would remind you that certain things which our ancestors would have called inconceivable, as for instance that a human voice speaking quietly into a tube in Manchester should be distinctly audible in London, or that messages could be transmitted from land by wireless telegraphy to ships at sea—these

things can, and do, happen daily. What we popularly, and too hastily, call "inconceivability" is no test of impossibility. The certainties of science are no certainties when the future is in question; even if all the generalisations are correct, there is always the possibility that some new element will come into the situation to upset the most careful calculation. But let it suffice for the moment that "knowledge" of the goodness of the Universe is not of the same order as "knowledge" of the laws of Nature. It is, I believe, something surer far.

Let us consider other forms of certainty. Since I was quite a little boy I have never been taught to paint, and I am afraid I have no aptitude for painting; in this I am like many others. But had I been sitting by Turner's side one evening with my paint-box and my brushes and my water-pot, I too could have painted *The Fighting Temeraire*, or tried to paint her, as no doubt Turner said he *tried* to paint her. How would you prove my painting inferior to that of Turner? "His painting is more accurate," you would say. "Yes," I should reply, "but accuracy is not everything; there is *soul*." "His colours are more beautiful," you argue. "On the contrary," I answer, "I vastly prefer my own—they are more bold, and the chief virtue in this sort of work I consider courage!" "Well," you rejoin, "if you

cannot see that Turner's painting is / glory and yours a smudge, I have nothing more to say to you, only you are wrong." And I should be wrong ; everyone with a sense of beauty would see that at once, but you could not prove it to a man without that sense. I have used an extreme instance ; I know that there are many and diverse preferences in æsthetics, that no company of art critics or musicians would agree upon exactly the same order of merit amongst the masters, but all agree that in art there is a higher and a lower, and it is our business to train ourselves to appreciate and understand wherein excellence consists. You cannot prove by Euclid that Beethoven's symphonies are superior to rag-time, but it is quite certain. The fact that there are men with no sense of music and others colour-blind does not make us less sure in our æsthetic judgments ; may it not be that in contemplating this Universe one man may see the glory of God and another be spiritually colour-blind ?

Before developing further this idea I would draw your attention to yet another form of so-called knowledge, the knowledge of persons, and especially of friends. It is written in Scripture that "no man hath seen God at any time" ; it might with equal truth be said, "no man hath seen his friend at any time." That which most we love in our

friend is himself, his personality, which we have never seen.

Let us consider further what is involved in knowledge of a friend. Such knowledge is far more than mere awareness that there is, or must be, such a person, and an acquaintance with what he does and says. We distinguish clearly between knowing about a person and knowing him. The most villainous character may be a great student of New Testament history, and may know all the ascertainable facts about the life and teaching of Jesus ; but he could not be His friend. He will know the facts, but he will miss their meaning. What is it that makes true friendship possible ? There need be no similarity of upbringing or of temperament, but there must be a certain oneness of spirit, a sharing of ideals, a love for the same things. To be the close friend of a good man requires a certain goodness in us, or at least a love of goodness. Apart from that, it is evident, no true fellowship is possible. In this kind of knowledge certain moral or spiritual qualities are needful. Let me give an obvious illustration. Whom would you choose to write your biography ? I am sure you would not say that you would be satisfied with any 'diligent Dry-as-dust who would take the trouble to grub up the facts about you ; "No !" you would say, "he would not *understand* ; I would have my *my* biography

written by one who loved me, one who knew, not only what I did but what I wished to do, one who knew 'all I was meant to be, all men ignored in me.' Only my friend could write my true biography."

You will appreciate that this knowledge of a friend is quite a different kind of knowledge from mathematical knowledge or knowledge of the Laws of Nature or knowledge of what is good in art; this new kind of knowledge requires not only gifts of intellect and fine perception, but also certain gifts of character.

Perhaps you will feel inclined to demur at this point, that after all such knowledge is of a very fragmentary and imperfect sort, and that human character is not very dependable. It may be readily and sadly admitted that many persons are wayward and unreliable, but not the noblest characters. If I were to say "I am quite certain my father would never do a thing like that!" I should mean what I said; I should be *quite certain*. In one of the late and apocryphal Gospels the story is told that when Jesus was young, a boy ran hastily round the corner and knocked Him down. Jesus cursed the boy and the boy died. We are *quite certain* that this story is not true. How are we quite certain? We reply we *know* that one like Jesus would never do that. This certainty we do not, and cannot, question.

Knowledge of God, if it be attainable by man, will be of the same sort as knowledge of a friend.

II

The Understanding and Misunderstanding of God.

But, it may be objected, granted we can attain great certainty about the character of friends and those whose actions and words are known to us, how can we be sure of God's character, Whom we cannot see? It is true that we come to know our friends at first by seeing their faces, hearing their words, feeling the pressure of their hands—through the senses, that is. But he would be a bold man who would affirm that there is no communication between human beings except through the five senses. There is the largely unexplored territory called telepathy; there is, especially in the case of some men, that peculiar quality which is known as "atmosphere," which is perceptible enough to the spirit, but not, so far as we can understand, through any of the five senses; there is further the weird and mysterious power which is given to few and which is known as second sight. We seem driven to postulate some "perception of the soul," as an old philosopher called it (*ψυχῆς αἰσθησις*). But if man can come into communion with man without sensible perception, there is

no theoretical reason why God and man should not be in direct communion with one another. But even if we had no parallel for direct communion, it would be impossible to argue that because there is no immediate communication between human spirits there can be no direct communion between men and Him Who is the Ground of their existence.

But is there no communion between God and man mediated through the senses? Our last chapter left us with the question, of what sort is the mind, the heart, the will behind the Universe? For the world of Nature we must needs regard as in some sense God's book, God's painting, God's drama. The question for us is, can we read His book, can we understand His painting, can we see His purpose in the great drama of Creation and History? Now, after what has been said above, we should expect that only those who are in sympathy with God will understand His handiwork; we shall not be at all surprised to find that different minds with much the same facts before them have come to diametrically opposite conclusions about the world. Aristotle held that in the realm of Nature things are disposed in the best way possible; Schopenhauer is reported to have seen in the Universe only the rotting corpse of God. If it is through His works that we are to come to the knowledge of God, we shall not be too much

perplexed at the differences of men, remembering that in Nature some are colour-blind. We should expect that men must be of a certain character before they can understand God's meaning and purpose. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." You would not be surprised if the man who in measure sees God's purpose sees it and knows that he sees it, yet cannot prove it to the blind friend at his side.

But the question arises, how is it that some should see the meaning of things and others should miss it? It has been said that all unbelief is due to sin. It is not true that deliberate sin is the reason why some men remain agnostic or unpersuaded all their days. The problem is that of the cause of error in interpretation, and its clue may be indicated by an illustration. Imagine three children looking at Watts' famous picture of "Hope." One child sees the sad expression on the woman's face, and says, "Oh, what a sad picture!" Another is struck chiefly by the globe on which the figure sits, and points to it and says, "What's that?" The third puzzles over the harp with but one string left, puzzles and puzzles until at last the meaning dawns. The two who missed the meaning of the picture had laid stress upon the less important elements in it, and had missed that which gives meaning and unity to the whole. In the same way one man

contemplates the Universe, and his eyes are filled with the sadness of the picture; he sees there only tragedy. Another, of a more scientific turn of mind contemplates chiefly the globe, and wonders what it is; the third seizes the element which gives meaning to the whole. Thus error comes from stressing the wrong values; it is not incurable, like colour blindness; as soon as the picture is seen in the light of that which gives it meaning, the disability drops away, and the veil is removed.

But is not this rank individualism? One man will see in war the dreadful working out of The Divine Justice and Providence; another will be equally convinced that war is the very thwarting and negation of the Will of God. One man will be inwardly persuaded that a certain hierarchy and a certain preordained sacramental system is the appointed and gracious plan of salvation; to another it will be clear as the sun at noonday that all times and all places and all acts are sacred, and that there is no limiting principle in the Divine economy. Each will think the other colour blind. Mere inward conviction is indeed no proof, for there is hardly any absurdity of which there is no one convinced. But there is a test, and that a strict one, to which all these persuasions must be brought, the test of Reason or consistency with all the rest of knowledge.

This point will be developed later ; for the moment we are merely concerned to show that though all men do not see the purpose of God, and men differ widely in their interpretation of it, as musicians differ in their interpretation of the occasion and meaning of Chopin's Fifteenth Prelude, yet there is a purpose, and it may be seen by some, though they may be unable by any argument to persuade others of what they see.

No man demands proof to be sure of his mother's love. But it would be a strange thing if a man could find no proofs. And it would be a strange thing too if we could produce no proof that the Universe is good, even though from the nature of things such proofs cannot have the same kind of cogency as the conclusion of a syllogism or the demonstrations of Euclid.

Every master reveals himself more or less in his handicraft. God must reveal Himself in Nature. But if, as we think, there are higher and lower orders in Nature, self-conscious man being the highest, we must suppose that God reveals Himself and His purpose more completely in a man than, let us say, in a trout or in a stone ; and more completely in a good man than in a barbarous man ; and most completely in the best man, whom we take to be Jesus of Nazareth. True, if any one cares to say that he

has far more admiration for Napoleon or for Bismark than for Jesus Christ, we may not be able to prove our preference, but we cannot doubt its validity. We cannot think of God as the clumsy artificer of the world, Who has somehow made a character more beautiful than Himself, or made us capable of imagining a Being better than Himself. We shall consider in our next chapter the difficulties to this interpretation raised by the existence in the world of so much evil and pain ; but meanwhile our principle must stand, that the highest we can know or imagine must be the truest revelation of God.

“ I passed along the water’s edge beneath the humid
trees,
My spirit rocked in evening light, the rushes round my
knees,
My spirit rocked in sleep and sighs ; and saw the moor-
fowl pace
All dripping on a grassy slope, and saw them cease to
chase
Each other round in circles, and heard the eldest speak :
“ Who holds the world within His bill, and made us
strong and weak,
Is an undying moorfowl, and He lives beyond the sky ;
The rains are from His dripping wing, the moonbeams
from His eye.”

“ A little way within the gloom a roebuck raised his
eyes,
Brimful of starlight, and he said : ‘ The stamper of
the skies,
He is a gentle roebuck ; for how else, I pray, could He
Conceive a thing so sad and soft, a gentle thing like
me ? ’ ”

III.

Is God a Person?

This quotation raises in our minds a further problem. If the idea of God that the moorfowl or the roebuck may form is so inadequate, how may we be sure that ours is not similarly, if less, inadequate? If God is not the Supreme Moorfowl or the Supreme Roebuck, how can we say that He is the Supreme Person? Indeed it is commonly said to-day that God is more than personal. The suggestion that God is more than a Person may be made in reverence; but it does not lead to greater reverence, and in fact super-personality, or whatever we like to style it, when we inquire further what is meant by it, not uncommonly turns out to be something less than personality. Of course we can *spea*k of a Being Who is more than a personality, but when we are asked what we mean by that, and what then He is—if we may even call it He—we are of necessity dumb. We say very properly that man is only achieving personality, that is, a perfect or harmonious personality, and that God is perfectly that which we are imperfectly; this rightly marks the perfect character as part of true personality, but what is a Being who is more than a person? Let us not be misled by our quotation. The moorfowl and the roebuck are not in fact reasoning and self-conscious creatures,

they are not capable of the reflections ascribed to them. We saw in the first chapter that unless we take the view that Nature and History are entirely accidental, the work, or rather sport, of chance, we must conceive of the Universe as rational ; but Reason itself is a mere abstraction ; reasoning is a function of personality. A being, more than a person is proper nonsense, if sense means that which is reasonable. God then, is a perfect personality ; and if there should appear on earth a perfect personality, he would be the " express image of God."

But a word of caution is necessary here. When we say that super-personality is a notion to which we can attach no meaning whatever, and therefore we argue that God must be a Person, we must not be understood to mean that God is a human being or that God is a thinking, willing, feeling Being in exactly the same sense that we are and different only in that He is perfect while we are imperfect. That could not be. He Who is the Ground of the being of all others cannot Himself be just as they are. Because God is the Ground of the Universe, what we may call His " thinking " cannot be identical with ours. The Universe or some part of it is the object of our experience, and our experience is to a large extent independent of our choice ; it is the " other " which is contrasted with the " self." But if God

had experience as we have, there would be something other than God of which He was not the Ground. So we must say that in some way which we cannot yet comprehend, though we must affirm it, God's experience, if we may use the term, is not passive as ours is, but creative. Again, our thinking is discursive and moves from point to point, but He Who is the Ground of all things must apprehend the whole as one; His thought must be intuitive and creative, not discursive and dependent upon that which is not Himself. Further, we must suppose that with God thinking and willing are synonymous, for we cannot suppose that He first devises a plan and then must consider means to its accomplishment; His thought and His creation are one activity.* In this sense the Divine Being is a mystery and can from the nature of the case only be defined by negation. But when we say that man is made in the image of God, or conversely that God is a Person, these differences are not relevant. For thinking, feeling, willing are simply modes of personality suitable to the conditions of human life; the modes of God's existence are other; but that of which thinking, feeling and willing

* There is inevitably lapse of time between the inception and fulfilment of God's purpose in relation to free moral agents. It is not meant here that God is out of relation to the time process; but we cannot say of Him as we can of ourselves that the temporal is a mode of His experience. This footnote must suffice to indicate one of the most obscure problems of human reflection.

are modes is character ; character is the meaning of personality. By the doctrine of the personality of God, then, we mean, not that God's activities are the same as man's, but that man shares at least as a potentiality in the character, the moral and spiritual Nature of God, and that God is rational, loving and willing, though the modes of His activity may be different.

IV

Revelation.

To return, the history of human progress has been the tale of man's growing understanding of the meaning of life and appreciation of Beauty and Goodness. But if such understanding and appreciation are themselves the purpose or part of the purpose of the Person behind the Universe, we may strictly speak of God's 'progressive self-revelation to man through Nature and through human character and achievement. He has spoken through Nature, through the wonder which even primitive man can see in the beauty of a flower, through those who have in later times been able to interpret Nature. Still more clearly, because in a higher sphere, He has spoken through "His servants the prophets," that is, through human insight and character. In our human fathers and mothers, in the heroic souls of history

in the inspirations of poets and psalmists, in "all holy and humble men of heart," God has revealed Himself to us.

"If Mary is so beautiful
What must her Maker be?"

It is therefore written in an excellent philosophical spirit, "God Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." We are not to think of the Incarnation, as we call it, as something altogether out of relation to God's ordinary ways of self-revelation, but rather as the culmination and fulfilment of a process as long, at least, as the history of the human race.

The first chapter led us to the conclusion that we must postulate God as a Person; we have seen in this chapter that it is meaningless to speak of God as more than a Person; we have claimed that God must reveal Himself in all His handiwork, and must reveal Himself most perfectly in the highest human character that we can know or conceive.* For us, that means Jesus Christ.

* I add this clause "or can conceive" partly because it is philosophically sound and partly to meet a possible objection that we cannot attain absolute certainty concerning the facts of the life of Jesus—a question too large for discussion here.

V

The Person of Christ.

It has been said to me, "I admit that Jesus Christ is the best man who ever lived, but I cannot admit that He is the final revelation of God; one day there may come a more perfect revelation." If this means anything, it means that one day there will come a better character than Jesus Christ, a more godlike personality. Let us look at this for a moment. I can understand a man saying that Samson or Hercules or some other is the strongest man of whom we know, but it is likely that hereafter there will come a stronger, and put the strength of these in the shade. But one could not say, that chord is a perfect harmony, but hereafter there will come a more perfect harmony, or this building is perfectly proportioned, but hereafter there will be devised a building more perfectly proportioned, or this man gave his life utterly to the cause of foreign missions, but there will one day arise a man who will give his life more utterly for foreign missions! There is such a thing as perfection of personality, and it is meaningless to speak of a still fuller perfection.

Of any of our acquaintances and friends we can say, he has the weaknesses of his strength; he is so brave that he is a trifle

reckless, or he is so humble that he refuses the responsibilities he ought to bear, or he is so gentle that he is really too lenient with people; and we can say further that although in the main these friends steer their course steadily for some great end they have set before themselves, they are yet not utterly consistent, their wills waver sometimes, self insinuates itself even into their holy places, they are not sinless. But of Jesus, we cannot say that He had the faults of His good qualities. There was none of greater courage than He, Who stood alone before all the powers of the world and challenged them and never flinched; yet there was no recklessness in Him Who refused to be assassinated, and waited "till His 'hour' was come." He was meek and lowly in heart, He endured "much contradiction of sinners against Himself"; yet He made claim to more than human prerogatives, for He claimed to inaugurate God's Kingdom, and to be Himself the King. He was the friend of publicans and sinners, yet His pity was no maudlin sentiment, and His word was "sharper than a two-edged sword." He alone had not the faults of His good qualities. But His character was not a mere poise of usually conflicting qualities; He was not like a cold and perfect marble. His whole life was unified and illuminated by the consuming passion of disinterested

love. Such love is the noblest affection of the human heart ; it is indeed that which gives meaning and value to all the virtues ; for all sin, whether of falling short or of excess, is a failure of true love, and the perfect character is that which has no motive and no passion but love. Jesus was not so much an example of a perfect poise of qualities as love incarnate. He alone loved God with all His heart and soul and strength, and His love for men knew no barriers and stopped at no limits ; He was the Lover of all souls (there was none for whom He did not live and die) ; Who pleased not Himself, and came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, Who was afflicted in all the afflictions of His people, Who when He was reviled reviled not again, Who bore no malice but only love towards Judas who betrayed Him and His people who rejected Him and the brutal soldiery who crucified Him, Whose last thoughts were for others, not Himself—“ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” The saints have ever been conscious, more conscious than the commonalty of men, of sin and failure ; Jesus, conscious of the sin of men, was unconscious of sin in Himself ; “ I and the Father are One.”

In traditional theology, men have sought to prove the Divinity of Jesus from His supposed omniscience or omnipotence, but

there is nothing worshipful about being more strong or more learned than others. He is worshipful because He loved so much, because He was love; it is His human love which also is His divinest attribute; it was from the contemplation of Jesus of Nazareth that John came to the conclusion that God is Love. It is not the true order of thought to suppose that men had a high notion of the goodness of God, and because Jesus conformed to that ideal they called Him divine; for He created a hitherto undreamt of ideal of what God might be, and made it credible.

God, we have seen, must be a Person; Jesus, Whose life was love, is the perfect person; therefore God is eternally what Jesus was in time. Thus we have ascended to the first great principle of the Christian religion, from which indeed all theology derives, or should derive, namely that Jesus is the complete and final revelation of the character of God, and that when we would know what God is we must set our eyes upon Jesus to the exclusion of all else.

It is not the purpose of this book to work out all the theological implications of this principle, but in this principle, that the character of God is the character of Jesus, is a test or standard to which all theological doctrines may be brought and by which many may be found wanting. Our purpose

here is to take this principle and show, if we can, negatively that there is nothing in the Universe, neither suffering nor sin, which is really inconsistent with it, and positively that it alone makes sense of the Universe, and is thus the Reason and meaning of all things.

VI

The Meaning of Life.

But before we close this chapter we must make explicit one point that in principle we have attained. Jesus is not only the revelation of God, He is also the revelation of man. Not only is He the perfect character, "the flower of God and man," the illustration of what life might be, but He is the very meaning of life. We shall refer to this notion so frequently in the sequel that it will be well to make clear at this point exactly what is intended by it.

You may go into town and purchase a piano. When it arrives you may take it into the garden, crash down upon the key board with your hands and your feet, and use the instrument to scare away the birds. A good piano will serve that purpose excellently, but if you use it so, you will miss the meaning of your piano ; for the meaning of a piano is to express Beethoven ; if you use it for frightening the birds you will spoil it for its real end. Life has a meaning ;

the meaning of life is revealed in Jesus to be that man should walk in love to God and man, know the divine fellowship in all the happenings and experiences of the journey, and seek to bring others into fellowship with himself in God. Life is given to man that he should call forth this high music. He may use it for his own pleasure or passing profit, he may use it, so long as it lasts him, to scare away the birds of discomfort or suffering or care. But if he does he misses its meaning. Thus Jesus, because He is the Perfect Person, expresses not only God's attitude to man, but also God's purpose for man. He is the meaning of life.

III

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Enough

Here to record that I was mounting now
To such community with highest truth—
A track pursuing, not untrod before,
From strict analogies by thought supplied
Or consciousnesses not to be subdued.
To every natural form, rock, fruit, or flower,
Even the loose stones that cover the highway
I gave a moral life: I saw them feel
Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass
Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
That I beheld respired with inward meaning.

WORDSWORTH.

Idem praeteriti temporis eventus perperam et inconsiderate ad nudam Dei providentiam tradunt. Nam quia ex ea pendent quaecunque contingunt: Ergo, inquiunt, nec furta, nec adulteria, nec homicidia perpetrantur, quin Dei voluntas intercedat. Cur ergo, inquiunt, fur punietur qui eum expilavit, quem Deus paupertate voluit castigare? Cur punietur homicida, qui eum interfecit cui vitam Dominus finierat? Si voluntati Domini serviunt huiusmodi omnes, cur punientur? Sed enim eos voluntati servire nego. . . . Et sane nisi Deo volente crucifixus esset Christus, unde nobis redemptio?—CALVIN.

At the close of the last chapter we ascended to what I have called the first principle of the Christian religion, namely that God is perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ. This means that God is revealed as all-good, all-loving and as dealing with men as Jesus dealt with them. * It is possible that some will have followed the arguments one by one,

and will have consented to them, and yet will feel that the proof has been a *tour de force*; for in view of all the pain and suffering and evil in the Universe it is impossible to think that God is wholly good and perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ.

When we think of that long travailing which is human history, of the innumerable wrongs that man has inflicted on man, the sorrows, tears, agonies, sufferings, despairs of unnumbered generations, and not only of "old unhappy, far-off things, and battles long ago," but also of the horrors and degradations of life in uncivilised countries, in our own slums, in the lands devastated by war, the innocent so often suffering for the guilty, the sins of the fathers being visited on the children, as I write (October 1st, 1917) unknown thousands in China the victims of flood and plague and revolution, parts of Europe a human shambles, countless women and children in Belgium, in Syria, in Poland homeless, starving, destitute—our spirit cries out, against all argument, how can God be good and these things be? Are not the sins and sorrows and pains of manhood bar positive to belief in the goodness of God? Nor is the pain and suffering in the Universe all, or nearly all, due to the deliberate sins of man. Plague and famine, storm and drought, are part of the natural order of things, and the evolution of Nature, as described

to us by science, seems one long story, of struggle and death, of rapine and of cruelty. How can such a natural order be the work of a beneficent God ?

We may state part of the problem in another way. Jesus treated all men with an infinite and personal kindness, but nature is blind, relentless and cruel ; she takes no account of worth or ignorance or moral factor ; she will burn the hand of an innocent child, she will drown a saint as readily as a sinner, she has indeed no respect for persons ; with endless pains and at countless cost mankind must learn in her hard school. What wonder that man has regarded her rather as an enemy to be tamed than as a revelation of the loving will of God ?

Why need man suffer at all ? and if he must suffer, why must he suffer so much ? and why is the incidence of suffering so unfair ? and how came sin into the world of a good God ? and why does God seem powerless or callous in regard to His own world ? has He started a machine which He can no longer control ? is there a final meaning and beneficent purpose in it all ? These and suchlike difficulties cannot be lightly set aside.

It must first be remembered that the task of philosophy is to give an intelligent account of the Universe as a whole. It is beyond the province of man to show that no other

Universe than this is possible. Why things are exactly as they are, and not otherwise, we cannot know. All that can be asked or here attempted is to show that such a Universe is not inconsistent with the revelation of God in Christ, and that to attain the ends which are involved in a personal purpose some such order as we know appears to be a prerequisite.

It will be well to observe that Jesus, who was at least as sensitive to the pains and sufferings of the world as we are, did not in these see any reason to doubt the goodness of God. He saw the Kingdom of God to be in constant warfare against the kingdom of Satan, typified by sin and pain, and to be destined in the end to triumph over it. "Behold I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven."

But, it may be objected, if God is the Author of all things, as we must suppose, He must in some way be the Author of this kingdom of Satan which He is to overcome; in that case this warfare between good and evil, with all its untold suffering to human beings, seems like that mock naval battle which the Emperor Nero organised "to make a Roman holiday." Is human freedom a real or imaginary thing?

If Nature and human destiny be a fixed and predetermined order, then God must be wholly responsible for everything, and

the attempt to prove that He is like Jesus is hopeless. But there are many who hold that, while man is free, the natural order of things is determined. We must examine, then, these views.

I

The Reality of Human Freedom.

Let us therefore turn back to the contentions of the materialist whom we considered in the first chapter. His account of the Universe is that it consists of a number of inert atoms of matter, which are set in motion by mechanical force, and from the action and interaction of these atoms in motion arises the world as we know it. Thus the Universe is a closed system ; there is no force except mechanical force, and the explanation of the world is simply a vast problem of mechanics, for nothing in man or Nature is free. We have shown the absurdity of trying to explain the self that has experience as a mere illusion, of which that experience is the cause, for we cannot by thought get behind the self of which we are intuitively conscious. But the thorough-going determinist, including the man who believes that God both foresees and foreordains every event, is guilty of the same fallacy.

There are only two kinds of force in the Universe : mechanical, that is, external,

physical force, and spiritual or, as we may better call it, personal force. Personal force is that which we know in personal influence; its distinction is that it is not external, but works through the consciousness of the person affected. For this reason it can never be irresistible, because it makes its appeal to freedom. Now the determinist inevitably thinks of the operation of God's omnipotence as a mechanical force, or, if he be a determinist but not a believer in God, he thinks of impulses, desires and passions as so many mechanical forces, to the strongest of which, or to some combination of which, a man is bound to submit. But this reduces the self to something wholly passive; indeed to nothing more than a subject capable of receiving sensations and impressions. It is not even strictly possible to speak of such a subject as being drawn this way and that at the mercy of impulses, for there is nothing there to draw! Thus, in proving that the self is determined it is shown that there is no self to be determined, which is absurd! The self of which we are intuitively conscious as the subject of experience is at the same time apprehended to be conative, or spontaneously active, as well as the passive percipient of that which is not itself. In other words we are intuitively conscious of freedom, and there is no going behind that consciousness.*

When, however, it is said that man is free,

it is not meant that man can do anything he likes. In fact his freedom and range of choice is extremely limited. If a man is attacked by a mad bull in a field there are certain courses of action open to him. He may run straight away, he may hide behind a tree, he may dodge, he may try to throw his coat over the bull's head; if he is armed with a rifle or lasso or umbrella, his range of choice is thereby extended, but anyone who has been in the situation referred to will have been far more feelingly conscious of his human limitations than of that majestic power of self-determination on which the philosophers dilate. Thus human freedom has strict limits, and these limits are set by what we call the natural order of things. "There's a divinity that shapes our ends," and only within a certain defined sphere does man's freedom to shape his own destiny operate. That there can be in the Universe that which is causeless and due to "luck" is a quite unphilosophical notion, but nothing is more obvious to one who surveys human life than the presence of a very large element of contingency.

When a man is old, a casual draught or a sudden change of temperature may easily cut off his life;

σ μικρὰ πάλαια σώματ' ἐνάζει ροπή.

But who, be he never so wise or so robust, would care to predict exactly what he will be

doing or thinking a week, or even a day, hence? It will depend upon circumstances, he would say, but circumstances are unpredictable and contingent. The fate of thousands may depend upon a mist over the North Sea, or upon the occurrence of an hypothesis to a scientist in his laboratory, or even upon the dyspepsia of a monarch. If business had kept Alexander from his fatal plunge, if Bruce had missed his association with the spider, if not Luther's friend but Luther had been struck by lightning on that fateful day, if the Armada had not met with such a storm, if Napoleon had not been ill at Waterloo, if Wesley had not been rescued from the burning house, if Hegel had escaped the germ that took his life—we may multiply our "ifs" indefinitely—how different might have been the course of history. And if it be argued that the course of history is the work of a superintending Providence, we are bound to ask why does Providence allow the unrighteous to flourish like a bay tree? why was Nero allowed to harry the Christian Church? why was the Crescent allowed to prevail over the Cross? why was Lord Acton taken before his work was done? why was some fanatic allowed to commit a murder at Serajevo which set the world in flames? and ten thousand other unanswerable conundrums.*

We shall come later to our theory of God's

working in history, but we may as well repeat here that if God wills every event that happens, He cannot be like Jesus, and that to an observer of history nothing is more obvious than the enormous element of contingency.

Wherein, we may now ask, does man's freedom consist? It is freedom from what, and for what? We have seen that it is not freedom to do anything that he pleases; it is rather freedom, within certain limits which are set by Nature, to adapt himself to circumstances and to modify circumstances to his own end; his end is the fulfilment of his Nature.

How, then, shall we define human Nature? We define a watch as a machine made of certain materials for a certain purpose; in science we define, for example, water by what is called entropy and energy, that is, by what it will do. Water is that which heated to a certain temperature becomes steam, cooled to so many degrees becomes ice. As with a watch we can say what its component parts are, so we can call water H_2O ; but the only definition of it must be in terms of what it will do. Similarly in regard to human Nature, we can define it only in terms of what it has in it to do or to become. Now man is by nature a rational animal, but the actual rationality of a child or a savage is very little, and few even

among the most civilised are swayed and guided in any complete sense by Reason. Thus while man is by Nature a rational animal, he has to attain to rationality; that which is potential has to be made actual. Man is by Nature a moral animal, but morality is no true morality unless it be an attainment.

If it here be questioned whether man is a moral animal by Nature, we would answer that as soon as man begins to be civilised he has some sense of right and wrong, and that all men everywhere agree that right is right, even though in a particular case they may, owing to differences of education or other cause, differ as to *what* is right. We may farther quote the remark, due I believe to Mr. Chesterton, that if you were to see a man drinking his fifth whiskey and soda, you would go up to him, tap him on the shoulder, and say to him, "be a man"; but if you saw a crocodile eating his fifth missionary, it would be idle to tap it on the shoulder and say, "be a crocodile." Man is by Nature a moral animal. Man's freedom then consists in his power within limits to adapt himself to circumstances and adapt circumstances to himself in order to the attainment of his personality.

But freedom is freedom from bondage; no man, as we have seen, is bound by an external compulsion of Omnipotence, yet most men are very palpably in bondage.

to that which effectively prevents them from such action as would tend towards the fulfilling of their true Nature. Theoretically the confirmed drunkard is perfectly free to pass the public house without paying it a visit ; practically he is not free at all. Freedom to do that which furthers the development of a man's true Nature involves freedom from the bondage of "chance desires," from the sudden calls of momentary pleasures, from the seductions of passions which destroy instead of building up true personality. Thus freedom in the sense of the fact of choice is involved in self-consciousness, but this higher freedom to attain to the dignity of man's true Nature is the highest achievement of character, the goal of ambition. My dog, which I take on my walks with me, is not free in the great human sense, though he can run where he will ; for in fact he does not will to run in any particular direction ; he is at the mercy of his "chance desires." First a scent under one hedge catches his attention, then he crosses a rabbit's trail, and is off over the fields, then he is decoyed into a cottage door in search of food ; he is up and down, forward and backward through the lanes ; no one ambition unifies his course ; no goal is set before his eyes for the sake of which he will fare on, come what come may, until his object be attained. As it is with my dog, so it is

with many men; they are not tied on the leash by Omnipotence; they may choose and do as they will, but they are the slaves of "chance desires"; they are not truly free. Thus the true problem is seen to be, not whether the will is determined or not by some external power, but how the personality may attain to freedom.

✓ It will readily be seen that man cannot attain to character which shall have moral worth, unless there be this struggle which is the condition of its attainment. If man must have power to choose what is right, he must inevitably have power to choose what is wrong; and an all-good God desiring a Universe in which man should come to character and fulfil his destiny could not, from the nature of the case, but be the author of a Universe which had in it the possibility of evil. So far then the existence of sin and evil in the world is not inconsistent with the goodness of God. But we have still to consider all the unmerited suffering of the innocent for the sins of the guilty, and the apparent cruelty of Nature below the level of rational life.

II

The Social Nature of Personality.

We turn to the former of these problems. It is possible to show, not indeed why personality must be exactly as it is, but that

personality being what it is the innocent must suffer with, and for, the guilty.

It is a very easy and common mistake to think of persons as if they were self-contained atoms or like dried peas in a bag, jostling one another indeed, but never interpenetrating one another nor affecting one another from within. If one "pea" sin, why should it not suffer by itself, we say.

But personality is not of that sort. Reality, as we experience it, involves a society of persons ; indeed we only come to realise our own personality through the realisation that we are one over against a number of others. There is no such thing in reality as a man out of relation to his fellows ; such a being, if we may speak of it as a being, is as much a philosophic abstraction and as little a reality as a thinker apart from thoughts.

Further, that rational and moral character the attainment of which is the fulfilling of a man's Nature, is a character which involves the good of others as a part of its own good. In simpler language, love is the fulfilling of character, but love involves the good of others. If it is possible to do good to others it must be possible to do harm, or at least to refrain from doing good, which is a form of doing harm. Moreover, personality is such that fellowship is an integral part of its happiness. A man, at least a good man, cannot be happy while

all those about him are in misery ; the ultimate and complete happiness of one depends upon the happiness and welfare of all. If humanity is thus made, as it were, a family for good, and this good is such as to involve choice, it follows that in such a Universe there must be the possibility of mutual harm as of mutual good, and such suffering as comes upon the innocent as the result of the sin of the guilty is only inconsistent with the goodness of God if His purpose of a common, family good is less divine than that of a purely individual good. Unless personality were other than it is, the sin of one must be the burden of all, as the goodness of one is the blessing of all. We must consider later whether this plan of God has not been a gigantic failure.

III

The Uniformity of Nature.

If we agree then that the evils which man has brought upon himself through his wrong choices, and the story of untold wrongs and sufferings which make up so large a part of human history, are not inconsistent with the goodness of God, and at least as possibilities are inevitable in a world destined to produce moral personalities, we still have to ask whether Nature, "red in tooth and claw," can be the revelation

of a God of such character as Jesus. If God sometimes deals with man according to the gracious and patient way of Jesus, does He not in Nature also deal with men according to a quite contrary principle of remorseless judgment and stern vengeance? Is not the God of the Old Testament and of Nature a different God from the God of the New Testament? The mind cannot easily acquiesce in the affirmation of two Gods, and the same God cannot be a case of dual personality. But if we are to apprehend God as like Jesus, the purpose and end of Providence and Nature must be shown to be also of God's gracious dealing with man in love.

Does God will the eruptions which lay low cities like Pompeii and Messina? Does He will and intend the ravages of plague, of cyclone, of drought and of flood? It is usually supposed that these are the outcome of natural law, part of that determined order of things for which God must be held as ultimately and directly responsible. But such a contention raises well-nigh insoluble problems for the unsophisticated conscience. It is all very well to say that God's ways are not as our ways, and we cannot understand the mysteries of the divine Providence, but there is not one morality for man and another for God, and this method of dealing with the question is as much as to say that

men must believe in spite of reason! Such an hypothesis is a last resource, and happily we are not shut up to it.

The doctrine of the Uniformity of Nature, interpreted to mean that Nature is under the reign of immutable law, is the postulate of science. If the same cause could not be relied upon to produce the same effect, science itself would be impossible. Therefore, it has been argued, the natural order is fixed or determined.

Now we may readily admit that the same cause must always have the same effect, but we must remark that Nature is a vast complex, and events are not isolated in such wise that any event has one single cause only; nor does the same set of causes ever recur. Every event has a complex of causes which we may call infinite in number. Let us take a simple illustration. The scientist may select a normal, healthy acorn, isolate it from its natural surroundings, and prove by experiment and in accordance with the Uniformity of Nature that if you take an acorn and plant it in such and such conditions it will grow to be an oak. But no scientist looking at an oak-tree can by any possibility predict which, if any, of its acorns will grow up to be oak-trees; the fate of any particular acorn will depend upon a whole variety of circumstances—the weather, the soil, the propinquity of pigs, the whimsies

of boys, and much besides ; and all these conditions and circumstances will be themselves conditioned by all the rest of Nature (including human activities) ; and therefore there is nothing in the Universe which the scientist need not know in order to predict the fate of any acorn ; for Nature is an indivisible whole. Thus the botany books can tell us all about acorns in the abstract, but can predict nothing about any particular acorn, except negatively as that being an acorn it cannot develop into a cedar.*

This illustration may serve to show the extremely abstract nature of science. This is a reversal of our usual notions. The philosopher is usually represented as the man with his head in the clouds who deals only with abstractions and the scientist as the man who deals with particular and "real" things. We see now that it is the philosopher who deals with individual things, that is, with the real world of which he has to give an account, and the scientist who deals in general laws and general propositions, that is, with abstractions. This is not written to undervalue science, but it is to combat the popular impression that the scientist is the man who deals with reality, and the philosopher with doubtful

* But this is not strictly a scientific prediction ; it is a judgment involved in the notion of an acorn. An acorn that should grow into a cedar involves a contradiction in thought, that is, it is unthinkable. Thus it is a question of thought, not of experiment or observation.

speculations. And if it be said that much philosophy has proved to be mere speculation, the answer is that much of science has also proved to be in the same category, but that both philosophy and science have yielded undoubted results for thought and civilisation. Thus the Law of Uniformity of Nature has been shown to be abstract and to be capable of telling us nothing about the particular things of which the Universe consists, and we have to consider afresh whether Nature is a closed and immutably determined order.

IV

"The lions roaring after their prey do seek their meat from God."

It is only the almost ineradicable human tendency to treat abstractions, in this case scientific abstractions, as realities, which leads men to suppose that the course of Nature is inexorably fixed or determined. *Prima facie* at any rate the element of contingency is quite as marked in Nature as in the history of man. Why is it that monkeys have arms, birds wings, fishes fins and quadrupeds four legs? We are not able any longer to suppose that the various species and kinds of creatures appeared ready-made upon the scenes; rather, tracing back as far as we are able but with many necessary gaps,

we find that all highly differentiated species derive from more primitive and less differentiated forms of life, and that the now widely differing structure of creatures is due in largest measure to self-adaptation to circumstances. But circumstances are contingent. We are to imagine that primitive forms of life gifted with certain potentialities of development and self-adaptation found themselves some in the environment of water, others of trees, others of plains, within reach of differing forms of food, subject to differing climatic conditions and the attacks of various and different enemies—according to these various and contingent circumstances was the course of their development. We can see illustrations or adumbrations of this principle in the world to-day. There are the so-called “flying-fish,” which make beautiful the southern seas. In the effort to escape from their pursuers they found it a help to leap out of the water; they have now almost learnt to manipulate their fins as wings; conversely, the water-ouzel, which is of the thrush family, uses its wings only under water. We may take a yet more remarkable instance. “Look at the Galeopithecus, or flying lemur, which formerly was falsely ranked amongst bats. It has an extremely wide flank-membrane, stretching from the corners of the jaw to the tail, and including the limbs and the elongated

fingers. The flank-membrane is also furnished with an extensor muscle. Although no graduated links of structure, fitted for gliding through the air now connect the Galeopithecus with the other Lemuridae, yet I see no difficulty in supposing that such links formerly existed, and that each had been formed by the same steps as in the case of the less perfectly gliding squirrel; and that each grade of structure was useful to its possessor. Nor can I see any insuperable difficulty in further believing it possible that the membrane-connected fingers, and forearm of the Galeopithecus might be greatly lengthened by natural selection, and this, as far as the organs of flight are concerned, would convert it into a bat. In bats which have the wing-membrane extended from the top of the shoulder to the tail, including the hind legs, we perhaps see traces of an apparatus originally constructed for gliding through the air rather than for flight."* Thus lower organisms in the course of the ages have developed into highly organised species by purposive self-adaptation to environment, to the contingent, in fact, according to the potentialities of their being.

There seems thus in "animate Nature" lower than man what we may properly call an element of freedom and deliberate self-adaptation to circumstances. Indeed, only

* Darwin. "Origin of Species."

on this assumption can we explain how Nature is purposive, that is, develops to the ultimate production of higher types, which is the meaning of Evolution so-called, and at the same time how wasteful she is and full of false starts and experiments that come to nothing. God then is not directly the author of the cruelties of the jungle as He is not of the cruelties of the witch dance or the slum.

V

"Fire and hail and stormy wind fulfilling Thy word."

But can we make the same claim for "inorganic" Nature? Recent science tends to corroborate that affirmative answer to which along its own lines philosophy seems independently driven.

As science progresses it finds ever simpler and more elementary forms of life. There seems no reason why that process should not proceed on indefinitely. Already the boundaries between the "organic" and the "inorganic" are increasingly more indistinct. It may well be that one day science will prove to satisfaction that there is in reality no such thing as a sphere of the inorganic in Nature anywhere. Philosophy cannot claim to prove this apart from science; but it can legitimately be maintained that such an

hypothesis would cast light upon some of the else insoluble problems of science, and further that only upon some such hypothesis can the moral problem raised by pain and evil in Nature find a satisfactory solution.

If the common view be true, that Nature consists of the organic and the inorganic, there are two problems for which no solution can be found. The first is, how could the organic arise out of the inorganic? There is here a breach in continuity which is fatal to the evolutionary theory as able to account for the world as it is, and some kind of second creation has to be assumed. Secondly, the contention of those who believe in an inorganic element in Nature is that the inorganic order has arisen from an original mass of material atoms, or units, which are exactly alike; but in Nature as we know it, even in inorganic Nature, nothing is more marked than the individuality of things; things are exactly alike only when abstracted from their real place in Nature by the experimenting scientist. The insoluble problem is how, out of a mass of wholly similar particles, an order full of individuality could arise. An original mechanical impulse working upon precisely similar atoms could not produce it.

This leads us to a further consideration, the Universe consists of individuals, but there are degrees of individuality. There is more individuality in a plant than in those

creatures far down in the scale of life that consist of a number of cells more or less loosely strung together, more in them than in a lump of coal. But there is a real individuality or unifying principle even in a lump of coal. True, you can very easily break up the lump; but why is it that if you drop a little gum in the grate it will stick to the fender, but a lump of coal will not stick? Why is it that the pebble beach is not a solid mass? It can only be because there is a real principle of cohesion in the coal and in each pebble, some principle which keeps it together; but how can something abstract as a law, or principle, hold together the lump? A theory of inorganic atoms can give no rational account of this universal fact of individuality.

Let us now assume that the Universe consists of a number of living units, or atoms, or individuals or, as in this doctrine they are usually called, monads; and these problems become at once intelligible. These individuals, or monads, we shall conceive not as persons in the full self-conscious sense in which we are persons, but as beings with a real individuality, with a real, if strictly limited, power of initiative, with an impulse to self-preservation, and certain real, though limited, powers of self-adaptation to circumstances and contingencies. These individuals, according to the law of

their being, have worked out an order which is Nature. By the law of their being is not meant a compulsion which they were not able to resist, but a purpose which they spontaneously fulfil. Progress, then, must depend upon there being some opposition which will call forth the latent powers of the individual, and the Universe must be conceived as a system of monads or individuals or persons working out an equilibrium or system or society according to the law of their being. The progress or development of Nature then consists in the gradual attainment of more stable and more complex forms of organisation, these forms as they are attained becoming permanent or, as we may say, habitual and making opportunity for still higher forms. This corresponds to the old distinction between *Natura naturata* or Nature as a stable system, and *Natura naturans* or Nature working out a higher system.

If this is the case there is complete continuity through out Nature, and we are not compelled to assume a fresh start late on the journey when life first arrives upon the stage; life was there from the beginning. But in this case we must not think of Evolution as the rolling out of an already predetermined order, but as a working out through experience, failure and success of an order, the possibilities of which, but not

every step of which, were latent in the first beginnings. Thus Evolution is not like a book which works out at length and in detail that which is implicit in its first chapter, but rather like a jig-saw puzzle, which a man works out after many attempts and many false steps.

We shall not, then, regard the world as a system perfect from the beginning and wholly corresponding with the purpose of God, but as a multitude of living individuals working out an order by mutual self-adjustment. We conclude that there is a real element of freedom running throughout Nature; there is a real contingency; there are possibilities of retrogression, as well as of progress; there is a real struggle (not a mock struggle, as determinism involves); and that which we recognise in human history as the working out of an ordered and stable society from the individualism and barbarity of primitive times has a real and close parallel in the history of the rest of the Universe. Therefore God is not personally and directly responsible for every happening in Nature.

VI

God in Nature.

We are in a position now to see that need and a sense of want are essential to progress. In the lower stages of life before the arising

of conscious ideals these are the only incentives. Pain and suffering and physical evil in the Universe can be seen to be essential at least as possibilities to such a Universe as this is, the purpose of which is the attainment of an ideal through experience. Now a personal purpose can be worked out in no other way; for a purpose for persons can only be accomplished through the consent of those persons. Therefore the pains and sufferings incidental to the use or misuse of the freedom of persons is not inconsistent with the wholly gracious and fatherly purpose of God.

How then are we to conceive God's relation to the Universe? Does not our theory reduce Him to the status of one who has made a Universe with great possibilities for good but with equal possibilities for evil, with which, when they arise, He is impotent to deal? By no means. We may borrow from Professor William James an illustration which he has used in a somewhat different context, and we may conceive the history of the Universe as "a game of chess between God on the one side and the individuals He has created on the other. God's opponent, if we may so put it, is perfectly free within the limits of the possible moves, but in the end the superior player is bound to win. The limitations of the illustration are obvious; what is meant is that, in spite

of failures, mistakes and set-backs, an order is being worked out ; chaos has been reduced to cosmos ; higher forms of life wonderful and beautiful have been produced ; man himself has emerged, and, although the process is far from complete, society has progressed far from primitive chaos to an established and voluntarily accepted order.

But, granted that in the end the Universe tends increasingly to produce an order and equilibrium, it is a very cold and unsatisfying doctrine with which we seem left, namely that Nature and man are left to themselves in the working out of this cosmic process, and God is reduced to an interested but helpless spectator ; true He is by this theory relieved of responsibility for any particular evil, but only at the cost of virtually removing Him outside the Universe altogether, and thus a more logical solution of the moral problem is found at the expense of personal religion. But so to judge is wholly to misunderstand what the theory involves. It is therefore now necessary to explain what is our theory of Providence and of God's working in history.

We come then afresh to the question with which we set out, are Nature and History consistent with the character of God as revealed in Jesus, and does God only deal with men in the same spirit and manner as did Jesus ?

If Nature is a system of living individuals, each with a certain freedom and spontaneity of its own, God cannot be dealing directly with man through Nature. It was not because of their peculiar sin that the Tower of Siloam fell upon its victims; the destruction of Messina was not the direct action of an affronted Deity. But cannot God interfere to save the righteous and for His own purposes? Is prayer a waste of breath for man when caught in a storm at sea or when laid low by a pestilence? On this subject it would be foolish to dogmatise. We know that a human being has power to influence the lower creation, his dog, for example, or the organisms that compose his body, by what we sometimes call psychic or spiritual force. We cannot know so as to define in what way that Being Who is the Ground of the Universe may so influence the course of things, only we must remember that such power is spiritual, not mechanical, and does not overrule the real freedom of the creature.

We have argued that earthquake, famine and tempest are not to be regarded as God's vindictive punishment of wrongdoers, *la divina vendetta*; but in the events of Nature God's will is revealed in two aspects; first, it is His will that personality should develop through struggle and attainment, for there is no other way personality can develop, and the fatal power of the

lightning is man's inducement to attain to a fuller life by harnessing the power of electricity to his own uses ; second, because the order of the Universe is a moral order ; thus the man who sins against his own body in his own body reaps the reward of his ill-doing, but the consequent suffering is not an angry infliction ; it is involved in the sin itself ; for sin leads to destruction ; that, is what we mean when we say that the Universe is a moral order.

More than that, when the Universe has attained to man, there has emerged upon the stage of history an individual who, being in a fuller sense a person, is able to have communion with God himself ; and there is no situation of pain or ill in which a man may not find God, so that the evil is redeemed and even transfigured into a good. But this is to anticipate the argument of the next chapter.

VII

God in History.

Next, therefore, we turn to the question, does not God express His judgments in history, does He not visit His wrath upon individuals and families and nations ? But if His wrath against Jerusalem was shown in the city's terrible destruction in A.D. 70, how can it ever be said that such a God is

like Jesus, who wept over Jerusalem and died praying for His enemies? The answer is that God works in history in two ways. First, the world is a moral order; sin brings its own inevitable consequences; anyone, as Jesus observed, who could read the signs of the times, could see that if the Jews persisted in the course on which they had embarked, this terrible retribution at the hands of the Romans was bound to come. Sin always brings suffering in its train, because it is a violation of the purpose of the Universe, which is a moral purpose; only in that sense was the destruction of Jerusalem the will of God. Second, God works in history because individual men are in conscious touch with Him. He is moulding history through men in so far as they will voluntarily accept His will. Our theory of God in history is not that He reveals His mind through majority votes of Church Councils, nor by any external means, but by "His servants the prophets," by those human beings, that is, who yield to His will and interpret it to their fellows. "God works in history through persons and through His moral order; his power is spiritual or personal, not mechanical nor, in the mechanical sense, omnipotent.

To sum up, then, thwarting and need are prerequisites of progress; a Universe destined to produce persons of moral worth must be

a Universe in which evil must be present at least as a possibility ; the evil and suffering in the world are not inconsistent with God's all-beneficent purpose, and we have found no cause to say that God has two ways of treating men, one that which is revealed in Jesus dying for His enemies, the other that of retributive punishment.

That the world would be better were there no sin goes without saying, but that as things are it would have been better had there been no world and that the purpose of God has been a gigantic failure would only be true if the evil in the Universe were shown to be final, and there were provided no method for its overcoming. To this, therefore, we now turn.

IV

THE VICTORY OF GOOD

Can I not sing but "Hoy"
Whan the joly shepherd made so much joy?—OLD BALLAD

Let thy day be to thy night
A teller of good tidings Let thy praise
Go up as birds go up, that when they wake
Shake off the dew and soar. So take joy home
And make a place in thy great heart for her,
And give her time to grow and cherish her;
Then she will come, and oft will sing to thee,
When thou art working in the furrows, aye,
Or reading in the sacred hour of dawn.
It is a comely fashion to be glad.
Joy is the grace we say to God. Art tired?
There is a rest remaining. Hast thou sinned?
There is a sacrifice. Lift up thy head;
The lovely world and the over-world alike
Ring with a song eterne, a happy rede,
Thy Father loves thee.

JEAN INGELow.

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society. How strange that all
The terrors, pains and early miseries,
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part
And that a needful part, in making up
The calm existence that is mine when I
Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end!
Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to employ;

Whether her fearless visitings, or those
That came with soft alarm, like hurtless light
Opening the peaceful clouds ; or she may use
Severer interventions, ministry
More palpable, as best might suit her aim.

WORDSWORTH.

THE last chapter was designed to show negatively that the existence of pain and sin are not necessarily inconsistent with the goodness of God ; but a good purpose may miscarry, and in this chapter we are concerned to show that evil is not final in the Universe.

I

"Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go."

The earliest arts of human civilisation, the building of rude shelters, the sharpening of flints, the baking of pottery, all arose in the course of the struggle for existence ; man's sense of need or danger spurred him on to experiment and discovery, and necessity was ever the mother of invention. Need of shelter, of protection and of food were the three great incentives to progress at the first. Civilisation involves the gradual triumph of man over nature ; he learns to fortify himself against the cold, to lay up store against the famine, to tame to his own services the power of the terrible lightning, and using Nature, as it were, against herself to subdue pain by anæsthetics. The spread of medical science, both healing and preventive, has

done much—and shall do more *ad indefinitum*—to destroy pain; even now a very great amount of the world's pain is preventable and unnecessary. Consumption, that scourge of nations, is largely a preventable disease; the suffering that comes to vast masses of mankind through the unwholesome conditions of the houses and streets in which they have to live is unnecessary suffering; it may be banished any day when goodwill is spread abroad.

But, although in this sense pain is being eliminated, it may be argued that in other ways the advance of civilisation means increase, not decrease, of pain. Primitive man must have been a tough and hardy fellow, a “braggly bulkin”; he was little afraid of draughts and little liable to “nerves.” Pain increases with refinement; but if the refined suffer most exquisitely they have proportionate powers of exquisite enjoyment.

We must not make too hard and fast a distinction between so-called “physical” pain, as from toothache, and so-called “mental” pain, as from remorse or disappointment, doubt or sympathy. All pain is mental in that it is related to consciousness, and all pain is due to disharmony. “Physical” pain is felt when we break the laws of the natural order; the pain of remorse is due to the breach of our true nature; the pain of doubt is felt when we cannot see the meaning

of things, when ours are "thoughts with things at strife"; the pain of sympathy, when others have come athwart the laws of Nature or of their own moral being. A good man can never be free from pain while others are in pain; indeed mankind is a family such that when one member suffers the other members must suffer with it. But pain is not ultimate in the Universe, for where men's attitude to one another and to things is right, the Universe does not react with pain and suffering against them; Reality is on their side.

Instances of this are not far to seek. It is but the bare truth to say that what a vast number of sick persons need is not physic so much as religion. Their illness is due to psychic causes, worry, disappointment, depression of one sort or another; they need reconciling to *things*, that is, to their surroundings or their lot in life, to the Universe as it affects them. If they could apprehend the meaning of life as a good and fatherly purpose they would soon be quit of their physical maladies. Further, we read in "Colloquia Peripatetica" the saying of "Rabbi" Duncan, "When I knew that there was a God, I danced upon the brig o' Dee with delight." Man is so made that mental happiness depends upon the discovery of God. Again, there is a disease which is rotting the life of civilised communities,

bringing in its train pain and blindness, deformity and death to the third and fourth generation, working incalculable havoc with human life. That disease will be eliminated as soon as men have the right attitude to life and to one another. In other words, where there is the right disposition, the Universe does not react against man with pain and with suffering. Man's need is for reconciliation to things, to God and to his fellow-man.

Can we wish it were otherwise? If sin and ignorance did not bring pain and suffering as their inevitable consequence, how could man learn? Pain is a warning and a finger-post; it is not penal in its purpose but redemptive. Where man learns to obey the law of his being the nature of things is no more against him. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now, waiting for the revelation of the sons of God." It might be thought that, should pain be utterly abolished, man would have no further incentive to progress, and would sink back into a self-satisfied and inglorious life; but this is not so, for a self-conscious being is able to set before himself ideals, and is thus increasingly independent of external stimulus to spur him on to action and to progress.

II

Stab my soul awake.

Again, suffering and tragedy* awaken man to reality. Not till the awful consequence had taken place and Jesus had died there upon the Cross did Judas awake to see what he was and what his treachery really involved; not till the home ~~is~~ broken up and the name disgraced has many a man come to face the reality of his own life; not without a war such as is now closing can the nations see what a materialistic civilisation means. In all these cases the lesson may be lost; Judas committed suicide; many a man has plunged further into ruin; it is not yet clear that the nations are prepared to order their lives according to the real purpose of the Universe. But without the facing of Reality there can be no hope, without repentance there can be no attainment. Further, men only fulfil their real meaning and destiny when they live in fellowship and sympathy with one another; yet for the most part it needs tragedy to evoke that sympathy. Only when men are in the depths of some great sorrow or calamity do we treat them in the way in which we should always treat them; only to a burial do we bring our myrrh and spices. Why speak no evil of men only when they are gone?

* Tragedy is here used in the popular sense of overwhelming suffering.

Why not break the precious alabaster "before-hand for the burying?" Or, once again, a man lives many years with his wife and never realises what she truly is. Then comes the tragedy and he stands by the open grave; now he knows, and his agony is a means of grace to him.

"The roof lets through the wind an' the wet,
An' master won't mend it with us in's debt :
An' all looks every day more worn,
An' the best of my gowns be shabby and torn.

No wonder if words hav' a-grown to blows ;
That matters not while nobody knows :
For love him I shall to the end of life,
An' be, as I swore, his own true wife.

An' when I am gone, he'll turn, an' see
His folly an' wrong, an' be sorry for me :
An' come to me there in the land o' bliss
To give me the love that I looked for in this."

But if man and wife have lived together in a perfect moral fellowship, together have seen the meaning of life and lived together in the same spiritual world, the inevitable separation comes, but it is not tragedy. True they have need to "learn a new way of fellowship," but possessing each others' souls, and living in a world of which Christ is the meaning, death is for them but "*umbra mortis*," a shadow, not a reality; it alters nothing but the externals of the fellowship; it has ceased to be a tragedy—in spite of tears, and

“through the darkness (infinite though it seems
And irremovable) gracious openings lie,
By which the soul—with patient steps of thought
Now toiling, wafted now on wings of prayer—
May pass in hope, and, though from actual bonds
Yet undelivered, rise with sure ascent
Even to the fountain-head of peace divine.

We said above that it needed tragedy to awaken men to reality, that is to the meaning of life, to what they are and what they ought to be. But the meaning of life is, that men should know the Fatherhood of God, and that this realisation should be the very air they breathe. When things go well with them men can “make shift to wag along,” forgetting God. If it needs tragedy to awaken them to their need of God, tragedy is a means of grace to them, and, as we have seen, where men have found the secret and know the Fatherhood of God, no tragedy can touch them; they pass through the waters, but they are not overwhelmed.

III

The Transmuting of Evil.

Suffering brings men face to face with Reality, not only with the reality of what they are, nor even of their right relation to their fellowmen, but, if they will have it so, also with God. Of the God revealed in Jesus Christ we must say that “He is not far from any one of us,” but we may be far

from Him, though He be near to us, and there are many who could say "it is good for me that I have been in trouble"; for there is no suffering or tragedy, whether due to the sufferer's own sin and ignorance, or to the sin and ignorance of others, in which and through which He may not so find God or ~~so be found~~ of Him that the evil is transmuted into good, and the victory over suffering won.

The supreme illustration of the transmuting of evil into good is in the Cross of Christ. Evil and repulsive in itself, it has become the symbol of the highest man can know; the reproach has become the glory. One Biblical writer boldly says that Christ was made perfect through sufferings. Certain it is that this uttermost suffering which man inflicted on Him, both by the manner of His death and even more by the agony of His rejection, was converted by Him into the supreme means whereby His love and nature was revealed; only in such a predicament could love be shown perfect and triumphant over the worst that hate could do.

Thus character is formed through suffering, and it is probable that others are far more influenced by the way a man takes his suffering than by anything that he can do, and Samson slays more in his death than through his life. Again, it is the common suffering in the seeking of some common purpose that makes most deep and true all

human fellowship. Take away all suffering, mental and physical, and how poor under present circumstances would character be, how shallow fellowship and life how spiritually inglorious !

Furthermore, the advance of true civilisation means the progressive elimination of those ills and sufferings which come from anti-social actions. If by civilisation we mean, not merely the increase in the conventions of life, but the better because more social ordering of society, we may observe both that there is real advance in civilisation during the comparatively short period which is human history and that evil is being eliminated. If this elimination seems very slow, we must remember that it cannot come but by the consent and co-operation of free beings. We may say then that gradually and slowly and with many set-backs there is being evolved or created a right and truly social ordering of society ; mankind is slowly attaining an equilibrium. But human beings, if we are to take seriously the meaning of Christ's life as the clue to God's purpose, are to be regarded and treated always as having an infinite value in themselves, not as instruments to some end outside themselves. Evil is not overcome in the Universe unless it is overcome in, and for, all those persons who compose it. This might be countered by the contention that

those persons who are dead have ceased to belong to the Universe and are become nothing at all; we must therefore here so far anticipate the next chapter as to say that the Universe is not a moral order, and therefore not rational, if the death of the body be the end of man.

We conclude then that at the present stage of the world's development, pain, and even tragedy, are an absolute necessity of moral and spiritual progress, a real though bitter means of grace, if we will have it so. God's mills grind slowly, but in the end the Universe is on the side of goodness and is the unswerving and relentless enemy of evil and of ignorance.

IV

The Overcoming of Sin.

There are then two forms of evil, mental evil or pain and moral evil or sin; these are not quantities or "things" the removal of which from the universe would make all things well; for there is no pain apart from beings who suffer pain and there is no such thing as sin apart from sinners. The problem is thus personal, how can persons triumph over suffering and over sin. We must leave till the next chapter the problem as it affects those who are no longer on the stage of this world; here we shall confine ourselves to

the beings now alive. We have seen that mental evil or pain cannot be removed while sin remains. We must now enquire into moral evil or sin. Man is to attain to character and to fulfil his destiny by the free choice of that which is good. Morality, as we have seen, is the true law of man's being; sin then is a breach of that law; a man in sinning denies his true self, just as contrariwise a man affirms his true self when he stands against the world for that which he believes to be right. It might appear from this however that a man has only to do the right thing, and all will be well with him. But the problem is by no means so simple as this sounds. It will be remembered that when we were speaking of the freedom of the will we said that though, theoretically, every man, not under external compulsion, is free to pass the public house, the habitual drunkard is in fact by no means free. The reason is that character is built up by all the choices that a man makes, good or evil choices becoming habitual by constant repetition. But in every choice the character as a whole expresses itself, and the character is the person. A man makes an evil choice, because to that extent he has an evil character; the choice is the expression of what he is, and therefore he could do no other. The problem therefore of the overcoming of sin is nothing less than this, how

can a man who has such a character as often to choose what is evil, come to have such a character as that he shall always choose the good.

It will thus be clear that moral evil is neither a substance that can be removed nor a debt that must be paid, and all theories of "Atone-ment" which have operated with such ideas are inadequate to the facts of the case. Neither Christ nor any other can do anything for us in this regard neither in this world nor in the next if he cannot do something *in* us. But that character can be changed is an observable fact quite apart from instances taken from the sphere of religion. That a man can be changed from a character of selfishness and self-indulgence to something very different by the love of a good woman or a little child is a fact happily well attested ; and although man's character cannot be changed by mechanical force, by spiritual force it can, yet not without his own consent. The law of man's nature then, the fulfilment of which is God's purpose for man, is, as we deduce from the life and purpose of Jesus, that man should be guided, ruled and filled by love, that he should walk in love toward all his fellows and enter into a filial relationship with God ; in other words that he should become a willing and true member of the family of God.

With this preface we shall not go back to

enquire into the origin of sin in the Universe ; we shall be content to observe that men being free to choose have all made faulty or inadequate choices, and that indeed the better men are and the higher their ideals, the less they seem satisfied with what they are, with the character they have attained ; if life was given men that in it and through it they might have fellowship and friendship with God as Jesus had, then it would certainly appear that God's plan in Creation has miscarried ; for Paul was only speaking the bare truth when he said that all are included under sin. But it is clear that if Jesus is the revelation of God, then it is God's purpose to redeem. Jesus said that He came to seek and to save that which was lost ; His purpose was to bring men home. When we speak of a lost soul, we should not mean one that is in imminent peril of being cast into some fiery hell beyond the confines of this world, but quite literally one who is lost and cannot find the way home and perhaps is unaware of home. The acknowledged purpose of Jesus is to seek for these until He find them. But the simplicity of the thought must not blind us to the difficulty of the thing. How is it to be done ? For observe two things ; first this, that before we can be at home with God, or, to put the same thing in a different way, before we can be the friends of Jesus and have true fellowship with

Him, there must come, as we have seen, a radical change in us. A good man may be brotherly and affectionate towards all men, but real friendship is only possible with such as share his ideals, love what he loves and stand for the things for which he stands. In other words, God's reconciliation with man can only be upon a basis of truth and reality ; God cannot pretend that a man is what he is not. If a man is a sinner loving the things that are lower and disobedient to the real law of his Nature, such a man from the nature of things cannot be at home with God, that is, with one whose whole being must recoil from all that is evil and selfish and impure. In every man therefore there is this disease of the character to be overcome, and what sufficient medicine or surgery can be devised ?

Observe in the second place and as following upon this, that a good example will not suffice. No doubt a good example often helps and inspires us to do the right ; but more fundamentally a man may say, the example of Jesus is my condemnation, not my salvation ; my condemnation, because apart from Him I should never have realised my failure and my sin ; His example so far from being my help is my despair.

Let us then consider where we stand ; if man was to attain to the destiny for which God purposed him, he must have freedom of choice and a world in which to exercise his

freedom. This freedom he has in fact misused, and through sin and ignorance has brought upon himself misery and ruin. Further, God's purpose will thus prove a failure, unless a redemption is possible ; to this end force or violence will be useless (for there is no value nor reality in a compulsory and unwilling fellowship) and a mere example will be insufficient. How then will God deal with this problem of sin ?

Let us put from our minds the language of traditional theology, and let us set our eyes upon Jesus according to our principle. How did Jesus deal with sinful men and women ? We may first note that He does not seem to have been at all interested in what we call "justice" nor in "the vindication of the moral order *by penalty*." He was not interested to see that "the woman that was a sinner" got her deserts, but only that she might be saved to holiness and purity and God. If this is to be done, there can be no glossing over sin, the reality and the shame of it. Thus the first thing that Jesus did was to reveal men to themselves. This woman, we may be sure, had always found excuses for herself when the world pointed the finger of scorn at her ; circumstances had been too much for her ; she had been more sinned against than sinning ; it was not her fault. But not a word of this could she say to Jesus ; nothing could be hidden from His

eyes. Zacchæus, the publican, had always found excuses when men taunted him with his profession; it was legitimate trade; business was business; a man must support his family; it would be much worse if the Romans were to do his job; he was quite as good as other men. But when Jesus came to him, he so unveiled Zacchæus to himself that he said, "the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man I restore unto him fourfold." "I want you to note that when the prodigal comes to his senses, he complains of nobody but himself, and speaks of no unworthiness but his own. He says nothing against any of the women who tempted him, nothing against the citizen who left him to feed on husks, nothing of the false friends of whom 'no man gave unto him,' above all, nothing of 'the corruption of human nature,' or the corruption of things in general. He says that *he himself* is unworthy, as distinguished from honourable persons, and that *he himself* has sinned, as distinguished from righteous persons, and *that* is the hard lesson to learn, and the beginning of faithful lessons. All right and fruitful humility, and purging of heart, and seeing of God, is in that. It is easy to call yourself the chief of sinners, expecting every sinner round you to decline—or return—the compliment; but learn to measure the real degrees of your own relative baseness and to

be shamed, not in heaven's sight, but in man's sight; and redemption, is indeed begun." So Ruskin.* Deliverance from sin, in other words, can only be upon a basis of reality; Jesus must make men face the reality about themselves before He can help them. This alone explains His vehement denunciation of the Pharisees; they had lost moral perspective; they were self-deceived and playing a part; so long as they were living in an unreal world there was no hope for them. His impassioned words were therefore an attempt to break down their barrier of hypocrisy and to bring them to face reality. God's redemption can only be upon a basis of truth and absolute sincerity.

More than that, we can see how the spirit of Jesus reacted to the sin and suffering round about Him. He was ever the man of sorrows; He was full of human sympathy for the suffering and the bereaved; when He saw from afar the towers of that city which He loved and which was rejecting Him, He could not stay His tears. Who loves much, sorrows much. See Him in the Garden; His disciples are asleep; He knows well they will desert Him; Judas to whom He gave His friendship has betrayed Him; He has brought the adorable love of God to men and they will have none of it, and He is in agony—"desperate tides of the whole world's anguish" and the whole

* "Time and Tide," letter xxv.

world's sin "forced through the channels of a single heart." So far God is revealed in Jesus as seeking to bring home to men their sins and as heart-broken over them; but this is a picture of tragedy, not of victory.

What could save men from their sins, from their low passions and unworthy desires? Nothing but "the expulsive power of a new affection." To have an ideal and to admire it and in general and so far as may be to aim at it is one thing and involves no change of character; to say "I count all things but dung that I may attain" it is quite another and involves a "new creation"; this latter is what Paul came to say about the ideal revealed in Jesus, and what others felt. Their attitude to him was not a distant admiration but a near and growing fellowship, not some aesthetic rapture like that of a poor sculptor before some perfect marble, of a designer of huts before the Taj Mahal; no, say they, "we love Him because He first loved us," and "henceforward it is no longer we that live but Christ that lives in us." That He who was so beautiful and stainless, the creator in them of an hitherto undreamt of ideal, that He should care for *them*, offer His friendship to *them*, take no refusal from *them*, and never let them go, that having loved His own He loved them unto the end, that His last thought before He died should be for His mother who had not understood Him, His

first thought when He rose should be for Peter, who had denied Him, that when His nation had determined to reject Him, yet He would not say, "Your blood be on your own heads; I turn to the Gentiles," to the end that He might show the Jews that even though they rejected Him, mocked Him, crucified Him, yet through the agony and shame, the blood and darkness and the dereliction yet He loved them still and would pray for their forgiveness even in the hour of His own shameful death, this it was that ravished their hearts, this that made die in them the old life with its old desires and selfishness—"He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*," henceforward "the life that we live, we live no more unto ourselves but unto Him that loved us and gave Himself for us," "unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. . . unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever"; it is the rapturous language of love, the wondering, adoring love of the creature responding to the amazing love of God, the great Lover of our souls. We may remark that those to whom this experience is real are already in principle delivered from sin, and the purpose of God is accomplished in them. "From the Cross light is thrown on what God is, and what man is. Every man is not only a brother for whom Christ died, but a brother for whom

Christ had to die, if He was not to deny Himself; there was no other way. When God created man, He created a being whose fortunes He had to follow down to the last. When Christ prayed for men on the cross—because even then He could not get His mind off them—He was uttering the last word about God, and about man. At that strange ceremony and at the hands of those strange priests He espoused to Himself the soul of every man for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, and death never can us part."

It death be the end-all for man, then we must agree that though more or less accomplished in a few, God's purpose has miscarried for most. But death, as we shall see in the next chapter, is not the end. Therefore we may thus sum up our conclusions in answer to the problems raised by the existence of pain and sin in a Universe which otherwise we must suppose to be the work of a Being such in character as Jesus.*

Privation and need are at lower stages the inevitable prerequisites of progress. The advance and attainment of order in the Universe involves the progressive elimination of pain; and among self-conscious beings, as civilisation advances, 'conscious ideal increasingly takes the place of external stimulus to progress. The Universe is a system such

* The problems of this and the foregoing chapter are discussed more fully in "Reconciliation and Reality," by Mr. Fearon Halliday, an earlier volume in this series.

that an order is to be attained through it by means of individuals with some real freedom whereby to work out the inherent law of their being ; violation of this law (which at least in the case of man involves moral wrong) brings its inevitable consequence of suffering. Because the Universe consists not of isolated individuals but of such as can only find their own real good in the good of the whole, the suffering of one member involves the suffering of the rest. But pain and sin are not final and ultimate in the Universe ; physical pain is being eliminated ; and where it is not eliminated it can be turned into good by the way it is borne, and there is no experience in which the soul may not find God, even as Christ came to the disciples in the storm saying, "Be of good cheer, it is I ; be not afraid " ; there is also a means whereby moral evil can be eliminated in the only true sense, namely of the forsaking of evil by sinners ; and although this purpose is far from being yet accomplished, still if beyond the confines of this life, as we must suppose, personality remains what it is, it is at least open to hope that the purpose of God may be finally fulfilled and the work of redemption perfected.

V

DESTINY

Omnes eodem cogimur, omnium
 Versatur urna, serius ocius,
 Sors exitura et nos in aeternum
 Exilium impositura cymbae.—HORACE.

Nostrum est interim mentes erigere,
 Et totis patriam votis appetere,
 Et ad Hierusalem a Babylonia
 Post longa regredi tandem exilia.—ABELARD.

IN the second chapter I said that it is beyond the power of science to predict the future with assurance. Science may say, for instance, that unless some utterly unexpected new element comes into play there will be a total eclipse of the sun on such and such a day so many years hence; but then some new element, *may* come into the situation; we cannot be sure. With what assurance then can I speak of the dim Beyond of human destiny? In certain respects with great assurance. For we are satisfied on two points; namely that God's character is not changeable, and that it is revealed in Jesus Christ. This does not mean that the map of the future lies before our eyes already; the future remains unknown; but of certain things we may be sure. Let me then put together some of the fundamental questions which we must face.

What of the kingdom of God? Can we be sure of immortality? What happens at death? Is there a resurrection of the body? What is the fate of the heathen? Is there a hell? What is heaven and can we desire it?

I

"The Kingdom of God."

We will consider the first of these questions first. Under the all-embracing notion of evolution it is natural for us to think of the process of civilisation, the history of man, as tending towards some ultimate and perfect finale; we postulate "some far-off, divine event towards which the whole creation moves." It is probably with these ideas in our minds that most of us pray "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Social reformers bend their efforts to serve that far distant "kingdom of God" which they interpret as the ideal society, the end of the process of civilisation.

The question then arises for us, what right have men to this optimism? What reason is there for believing that God's kingdom ever will come on earth and that society ever will be perfect? We may note that the phrase "the kingdom of God" or "the kingdom of heaven" in the New Testament never means the ideal society which is one day to be

coterminous with the world as we know it ; that kingdom is there conceived either as something wholly inward and spiritual or as having place in a reconstituted universe and under conditions different from those of "this life." It was not the view of the early Christians that the present world order was likely to last much longer or to develop a state of society when God's will would be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

Further, no reason can be shown why the purpose of God must be fulfilled upon the stage of this world. The purpose of the chrysalis is not fulfilled under the conditions of chrysalis life but in the butterfly. We shall also see later that, though this world can afford all that is needful for the lower forms of life, self-conscious man is a being for whom this world and the span of mortal life allotted to him is all too small ; man is inexplicable if this world be all, and upon this world his nature never can find its fulfilment. Again the ideal society must, that it may be such, be accepted by choice and free consent. This means that there must always be the possibility that some person or group might mar the else perfect order ; for all are free to choose. At the same time the Universe is, as we have seen, a moral order and in spite of, or rather through the exercise of, freedom a purpose is being worked out through the ages. The history of mankind, in spite of

many and grievous lapses, has been on the whole a story of progress; the notion of evolution involves an end to be attained; and it is hard to conceive of the Purposer and Contriver of the Universe as having set forth upon a plan which he is unable to carry through. Therefore, it may be reasonably argued, of the travailing of the ages there must one day be born a perfect society. But such an argument and even such a prospect leaves us somewhat cold, nor does it satisfy the demands of our spiritual nature.

Interesting and even inspiring as it might be to know that one day there should dawn upon this earth a perfect society, the culmination and crown of civilisation, we are not less interested in our contemporaries and predecessors, in the uncounted millions since the beginning of man's history who have toiled and laboured and built according to their vision, and who shall hereafter toil and labour and build, and who shall all be in their graves "not having received the promises"; is the Lover of Souls interested only in the super-society which is one day to be? Are they who made it possible to have no share in it? Are they to pass out into the darkness and the silence and their names to be remembered no more for ever? I must anticipate the next chapter by remarking here, that it makes or should make no difference to our conduct now whether or no this ultimate society

will ever be *on earth*, but the consideration of those who will not live to see such consummation, should it ever be, leads us to the question of human immortality : is death the end for the individual life ?

II

Immortality.

If you ask for some kind of mathematical or ocular demonstration of immortality, I fear you are doomed to disappointment ; such cannot be given. Yet what we call "the future life" is not a mere hope ; it is a reasonable expectation and assurance. Let us look at the arguments for and against. The only argument against immortality which, if it could be proven, would be cogent is the argument of the materialist who maintains that the ultimate reality is matter, and that consciousness and conscious life are merely accidental, an appearance thrown off, as it were, by certain combinations of material atoms in the brain. That materialism is an untenable theory has, I hope, been sufficiently shown in the first chapter. No other scientific argument against immortality can be convincing ; for even if it be shown that all conscious experience involves corresponding changes of the grey matter of the brain and that certain injury to or dislocation of the brain matter involves loss of or injury to

consciousness, no demonstration is thereby afforded that there can be no consciousness without a brain ; for science deals with that which we can observe and cannot say in advance what are the facts which will prove observable nor that nothing is real that is not observable.

But in this matter of immortality we are not well satisfied to know only that the hope cannot be disproved ; we crave for some assurance that it is based on positive reasoning. It is possible that one day explorers in the realm of psychical research may produce strong arguments on which to build our faith. That day seems to be not yet, but we need not wait for it to find assurance ; for this is not a moral universe, if death ends all. If we let imagination rest for a moment on the generations of human beings in the valleys of the Nile or the Euphrates, on the plains of India and of China who, before history began, were born and toiled a little while and passed away, on the unnumbered, hapless drudges, outcasts, slaves who not for themselves have laboured through their short spell of life, then must we

" . . . hear Humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish ; Or must hang
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities,"

or if we contemplate the great multitudes of our own streets and cities, stunted by evil

conditions, slain before their time upon the battlefield, or mankind as a whole struggling painfully and slowly out of the darkness towards the light, each human soul big with possibilities which it had neither time nor opportunity to develop, the life of each "mere glimmerings and decays," then if there ~~be no~~ life beyond for all, most surely

" . . . all the generations of mankind
With all their purposes, their hopes and fears,
Seem nothing truer than those wandering shapes
Cast by a trick of light upon the wall
And nothing differing from these, except
In their capacity for suffering."

We cannot give a moral account of the Universe if death ends all; in the world as we know it the incidence of happiness and suffering is too unfair; the prosperity of the wicked, the lifelong suffering of the innocent, are irreconcilable with justice if there is no life after death; the practical Reason demands that, we "call in a new world to redress the balance of the old." Of how many may we say, "he never had a chance!" Is there a moral order in the Universe, if only one man "never gets a chance?" We may ask further whether any man "gets a chance." Man is so "fearfully and wonderfully made" that the Universe is too small for him and his mortality a limitation of what he feels to be his true nature. Long ago Aristotle bade man "live so far as may be as if he were immortal"; sound advice for all, for only

as man lives on the assumption that he is an immortal being can he live upon the scale which his own nature demands.* The higher our ideal the more bitterly we cry out that if our hope is for this life only we are of all men most miserable.* For the higher the ideal, the more incommensurate it is with the possibilities of this short tale of days. We cannot give a moral account of the Universe if death ends all for another reason.* If there be no future life, Jesus died, and there was an end to the story. But the story cannot end there. I do not mean that tragedies cannot be real; they are: but tragedy is not ultimate. If Jesus died and that was the end, no rational account of the universe is possible; for the rational is the moral.

Indeed Immortality derives as a necessary consequence from our first principle. For if God be revealed in Jesus, then it follows inevitably that God loves men,* not in the mass, but as individuals; that He regards the human beings who at any moment compose society, not as useful and necessary means to the final purpose of the world, but as ends in themselves, that is, as having an infinite value in themselves* for Him. God only loves humanity because He loves all individuals; only if His purpose is attained in individuals is it attained at all. We call a tower on the hillside, begun but never finished, so and so's

"folly." Mankind is not God's "folly"; but if not, there must be life "beyond the veil." The practical reason demands that there must be an immortality for man.

Further in an earlier chapter it was shown that through Christ men are brought into fellowship, friendship, sonship with God Himself; even before Christ and in "heathen" religions God has spoken to men through the prophets, through men who have been in touch with Him, and through whom others have been brought into touch with Him. That man may voluntarily slip out of touch with God we may admit, but never that God would willingly have it so; for fellowship with Himself is the very purpose of creation. We speak of "losing our friends through death;" but if we would speak of God as "losing His friends through death," it would mean that He had created death to thwart His own purposes. If a man is in touch with God now, if he shares the mind and life of God, dying may still be an experience from which the flesh shrinks, it remains a thing sorrowful because it means some sort of separation, but it becomes a great adventure of the soul.

III

"The Great White Throne."

Let us turn then to another group of questions which we naturally ask; what happens at death? what follows? to what world do the eyes of the spirit wake on the far side of the grave? is the "great white throne" set there for judgment? is man's eternal destiny for weal or woe settled at that moment? what is the doom of the heathen?

If a detailed or pictorial answer is required none can be given.

"He that hath found some fledged bird's nest may know
At first sight, if the bird be flown;
But what fair well or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown."

Unknown to me must this remain until I am removed "hence unto that hill, where I shall need no glass." All certainty attainable must be derived from our first principle, that if we would know what God is we must set our eyes upon Jesus. What light then does this principle throw upon our mysteries? If, as we saw in the last chapter, God's interest is not to inflict penalty but to vindicate the moral order through redemption, to save the sinner, it is impossible that He should inflict pain except as a sharp medicine; punishment in fact, if punishment is the right word, must be remedial, not penal and vindictive. But it equally became plain in the last chapter that the sinner cannot be

saved until his sin is brought home to him ; while we think that all is well, there is no help for us. Peter's betrayal was agony to Christ, more than the brutalities of the Roman soldiery ; but when Peter "was turned" and saw what he had done, he shared the agony. We are not truly saved till we have been with Christ and felt about our sins and unfaithfulness and lovelessness what Christ feels about them, until, to use Paul's phrase, we are crucified with Christ. We are to think then of the Last Judgment not as the promulgation of a judicial sentence, but as the declaration of a fact. God must bring home to men what they are, what they have done. But about this two things may be said, first, that in large measure this Judgment is already past for Christians. The Christian who has been with the Magdalene at the feet of Jesus, with Peter when "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter" and then forgave Peter, with the Master Himself in the garden of the Agony—he has passed through the judgment already, or if his sin is not yet wholly brought home to him, yet he knows that the Last Judgment will also be the last means of grace, that he may utterly repent and utterly love God his Saviour. Second and following upon this, if a man can truly see his sin only when he sees it with the eyes of Christ and as sin against love, it follows that to be convicted of sin he must have attained

the mind of Christ. Thus is the Last Judgment essentially a means of grace. Through what remedial or purgatorial fires it may be necessary for the soul to pass before this vision be attained, we cannot know; but we are assured that all God's dealings with the soul must be in endless love.

Is there then no hell? That depends on what you mean by hell. Impotent, hopeless remorse, is that not hell? A spirit chained to low desires in which it can find no more satisfaction and from which no relief—there are souls in hell now, but not beyond the reach of Christ.

“A spotless child sleeps on the flowering moss—
’Tis well for him; but when a sinful man
Envyng such slumber may desire to put
His guilt away, shall he return at once
To rest by lying there? Our sires knew well
(Spite of the grave discoveries of their sons)
The fitting course for such: ’dank cells, dim lamps,
A stone floor one may writhe on like a worm:
No mossy pillow blue with violets!”

Is it possible for a human soul finally and forever to refuse the proffered grace? Who can say that? This only we can know that it is not the will of the Father that any should perish. What of those of whom we say that they have “never had a chance” and of the heathen? There is an old tradition that Jesus went down into Hades and preached to the souls there, and those that heard were saved. We may be dubious as to the locality of Hades, but we see that what is here meant

must be true. We can see not only that every soul will "have a chance," one chance or perhaps two or seventy times seven, but also that the Cross of Christ certainly means that cost what it might, through agony and blood and shame, the Lord, the Lover of Souls, would come to save. For there is a Shepherd-instinct at the heart of God, and what Christ was on earth God is eternally.

IV

Can there be a Resurrection.

We turn now to the question, is there a resurrection of the body? It will not be necessary to go into any detailed exegesis of the New Testament doctrine on this point. Let it suffice that Jesus Himself and His followers seem to have looked forward to a "rebirth" or "reconstitution" of the entire Universe. After the Resurrection it would seem that Christ's resurrection-body was taken to be the type or firstfruits of this "new earth" that was to be. Is it necessary and is it possible for us to believe this to-day? We must not be led away into a discussion of what actually happened to the body of Christ, and what the early Church thought had happened; for these things are far from clear and certain. We must be content to expound two points; first, we cannot believe in the resurrection of the flesh; that is to say, we

cannot believe that the material particles which are laid in the grave or burnt on the pyre will one day be gathered together, revived and made into a body again. We cannot believe this, partly because the particles that compose our bodies are constantly changing (though this would not be conclusive), partly because these particles buried or burnt are transmuted by nature into ever new forms and new bodies. It is very doubtful whether the primitive Church believed in the resurrection of the flesh ; it is certain that we cannot. But Paul's expression, it will be remembered, is not "resurrection of the *flesh*" but "resurrection of the *body*," and that is, or may be, a very different thing. Paul's argument on this point is that as on earth we have had a body suited to our earthly environment, so in the spiritual order beyond we shall have a body suitable to our spiritual environment. We are not bound to defend and justify all Paul's speculations about the future, and the term "body" here may be a trifle puzzling or misleading to us ; but the kernel of Paul's doctrine is necessary to our thought. The purpose of God is the union and fellowship of conscious beings with Himself and with one another ; all are to be of one heart and mind ; but the term fellowship involves that the one personality is not swallowed up in the other as when bubbles burst upon the sea ; though a man's

thought of things be the same as God's, yet the man's thinking of them is not the same as God's thinking of them; man is not identified with God as the bubble is with the sea. So is it between men; however great the unity of purpose and thought, yet there is differentiation of persons: one person must always be recognisable as different from another. We cannot say exactly what recognition involves in the spiritual world—what spiritual seeing or feeling is—but we see that there must be individuality and difference which involves that which in metaphor we may call “form” or, with Paul, “body.” “The resurrection of the body” may be an awkward and inaccurate term, but it may be taken as equivalent to “personal immortality” and as meaning that in the world beyond we are to retain our personal identity, our individual consciousness: that which is to survive is not some vital spark in us, it is *we* ourselves, we who have sinned and suffered and loved and died. It is of this that we are assured in the love of God for us.

V

The Eternity of Beauty.

In New Testament times, as I have said, the doctrine of the resurrection or redemption of the body was closely connected with the thought of the rebirth or reconstitution of

the entire Universe. This idea has not received quite the attention it deserves from philosophers and theologians, chiefly, I think, because they have been thinking of the Universe as a mere collection of material particles or as a mere school of morals. But as poets and painters and musicians and mystics have so long tried to show us, the Universe is much more than merely a collection of material or even living particles or a discipline of souls ; much more than the former as the cathedral is much more than bricks, mortar and marble ; much more than the latter, for can man suppose that the wonders and glories of a starry night, as visible to the human sight,—“ and these are but the outskirts of His ways ”—the infinite delicacies, beauties, orders of this “ quaint enamelled earth ”* are the mere chance off-shoot of a Universe designed exclusively to produce the domestic and political virtues ? There is beauty as well as righteousness to be accounted for in the Universe. Is beauty transient or eternal ? Certainly nature is ever changing—*παντὰ ρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει*, and all things lovely pass ; there is no recalling childhood’s bloom or the sunset of yesterday ; the world itself is growing old. Indeed there is strictly no beauty in things themselves

* ὦ δῖος αἰθήρ καὶ ταχύπτεροι πνοαί,
ποταμῶν τε πηγὰς πόντον τε κυμάτων
ἀνθήριθμον γέλασμα, παμμήτορ τε γῆ,
καὶ τὸν πανόπτην κύκλον ἡλίου καλῶ.

apart from the minds that appreciate them.

“ An auxiliar light
 Came from my mind, which on the setting sun
 Bestowed new splendour ; the melodious birds
 The fluttering breezes, fountains that run on
 Murmuring so sweetly in themselves, obeyed
 A like dominion, and the midnight storm
 Grew darker in the presence of my eye :
 Hence my obeisance, my devotion hence,
 And hence my transport.”

There is nothing permanent in the beauties of Nature except the emotions they awaken in the heart of man. Beauty uplifts the heart to purity and disinterestedness, to refinement and to peace, and is thus the handmaid to moral disposition ; that is eternal which she creates in the heart of man. But there is no immortality for the rose-bud ; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth indeed ; but the emotions awakened by the rosebud are that “ word of our God ” which “ abideth for ever.” Thus we may say that Nature which came forth from God that man might be, comes back to God through man.

But is there no beauty in the world to come ? Beauty is of shape and colour and motion, and how can these be in a world that is not temporal nor spatial ? Yet “ he that planted the eye, shall he not see ? He that formed the ear, shall he not hear ? ” It is idle to speculate about modes of experience which we cannot conceive ; but if we can assert that the demand for beauty belongs to true personality as such, and that in the next

world there must be, as we saw, that which is at least analogous to form, we are able to look forward to that life as the realisation of perfect Beauty no less than of perfect Goodness.

VI

Christian Funerals.

We turn now to a question which mankind has always asked, and which each one of us must ask when we look upon some human face from which the life has gone, or when we think of that hour which is lying hid in the future, how near or how far we know not, for each one of us, what happens at death, upon what far shore will the eyes of the soul open on the far side of the grave? We cannot but speculate; we do not know, and happily we have no need to know.

It may however be worth while to observe that this world is a very different place to those who share in it; there are those who are very much at home here and who wish for no heaven different in quality from the life on earth with its earthly satisfactions and delights. But the follower of Christ must ever cry out with Samuel Rutherford, "Fie, fie, this is not like my country!" he is of necessity a sojourner and a pilgrim having here no abiding city; in a world where the way of Christ is rejected, where

"Love is not loved," how can he be at home? As regards the world to come, it is written of some that "they shall see him whom they have pierced"; others again, it may be who, when they come to the river where is no bridge, shall be in like case with Mr. Fearing: "Now, now, he said, he should be drowned for ever, and so never see that Face with comfort, that he had come so many miles to behold." If the reader will refer back to the quotations at the head of this chapter, he will observe again that the pagan Horace thought of the next world as an "eternal exile" from all he held most dear, and that the Christian Abelard thought of death as a home-coming of the soul that long had been exiled in this far country:

" 'Tis ours meanwhile to put good courage on,
For our Homeland with all our hearts to burn,
And to Jerusalem from Babylon
At length, after long exile, to return."

"Mine eyes shall behold the King in his glory and the land that is very far off."

Ruskin asks very pertinently, "Why should we wear black for the guests of God?" It is one of the most urgent reforms in traditional Christianity that we make our funeral services somewhat more appropriate to the meaning of death.

VII

Heaven.

I turn now to the last questions which we shall consider in this chapter, what is heaven and can we desire it? One difficulty is this, that attempts to describe that future happiness can only be in earthly and symbolic language, as of harps and crowns and choirs; this is not the language in which we naturally try to describe our highest satisfactions; indeed we recognise frankly that our highest and happiest experiences even in this life are strictly indescribable. Who would attempt to describe the scent of new-mown grass or of the autumn hedges? Who can describe what it feels like to hear Bach's Passion music? And I seem to observe that young lovers when they seek to expound to their friends their new-found joys are quite as unintelligible as the book of Revelation.* If all these experiences must be experienced to be understood, we need not to be surprised or troubled that we find no language satisfying wherewith to describe the state of heaven.

A second and perhaps greater difficulty is that we cannot imagine any sensation being prolonged indefinitely without inducing satiety. We may be mightily addicted to

* Prof. Gilbert Murray points out that Homer makes no attempt to describe the beauty of Helen; he only says:

οὐ νέμεσις Τρῶας καὶ εὐκνημίδας Ἀχαιούς
τοῖαδ' ἀμφὶ γύναικι πολὺν πόνον ἀμφιμάχεσθαι.

seed-cake, but we can imagine few things more nauseating than to eat seed-cake without a pause for ever. Should we not grow weary of mere happiness hereafter, would not the heavenly Hallelujah Chorus pall in time ?

In order to see an answer to this difficulty, it is necessary to distinguish two sorts of time; there is chronometrical time which is a form of measurement, and there is real time which is a mode of experience. Chronometrical or mathematical time is a way of measuring the relation of events to one another; sixty seconds one minute, sixty minutes one hour, twelve hours one day and so forth is its table. But experience, that is, life, cannot be measured by this kind of time at all. No doubt the number of days and years which a man spends upon this planet as a human being can be numbered and measured in this way; but real life is measured by intensity or fulness, not by duration. In moments of intense excitement and of pleasurable experience we "forget all about time"; in other words, even in this life we transcend time, and the fuller life is, the less time counts. Again, time, in the sense of chronometrical time, is measured by the solar system and affords a convenient means for the organisation of human life in its interactivities; thus men can arrange to meet at any given time which is determined by the position of the sun. This time is related to what is in

space, because it is conditioned by it. But inward or real time is a question of the intensity of our experience. Thus if we think of the intensity of our experience raised to the *n*th degree, there is no meaning in calling such experience short or long. We may note that chronometrical time can have no meaning in relation to God who is not in space.

Further, all things in the natural order are changed in time; the tree becomes coal, the "everlasting hills" are continually altering their shape and being worn away, the human body grows old and finally dissolves. It is chronometrical time that ages us, because it is related to material conditions which change, or more accurately it is these material conditions which are marked by chronometrical time. But there are spiritual realities known to us now which time has no power to change. Character is one of them*; it is true that character develops and changes in time; the more unstable it is the more it changes; and all character grows with experience; still character or personality alone can withstand "the ravages" of time; time can bring white hairs and slow steps, and furrows to the face, but it has no power to destroy true love and nobility and goodness, for these things have an eternal quality; and of these we never tire.

* cf. οὓς θεοὶ φιλοῦσι θνήσκουσιν νεοί—"Whom the gods love die young"—whatever be their years.

A man may grow weary of constantly remaining at home and may crave a change of scene, he may grow weary of the discomforts and inconveniences of the house ; but of that for which home stands he never tires. Heaven is that for which home stands ; it is the realm of love. Therefore we may say that the fear of satiety in heaven is based on a misunderstanding of what time is and what are spiritual realities.

Of what kind will heaven be ? It must be nothing short of the fulfilment and consummation of the purpose of God in creation. Man He made in His own image, personal like Himself, that man might come of his own free choice and love into fellowship with Him, know His marvellous love and rejoice in His beauty. What is the best thing in the world ? Few that have experienced it but would answer human friendship and fellowship in Christ, that is to say, human fellowship that rests on a common attitude of love and gratitude to God and desire to serve all men in love, and of trust in each other and true affection, an affection far deeper, as we know, than social or racial distinctions ; such fellowship is in New Testament language the kingdom of God as it may be experienced on earth ; for the phrase "the kingdom of God" means heaven on earth. The outward conditions of that future kingdom, whenever it be fulfilled and completed, we cannot tell ; its

content, its life, we know ; it is " joy in widest commonalty spread " ; it is the life of Jesus, for that is the life of God and of such as live in God : its name is love. Where love is not loved there can be no heaven ; but wheresoever love is loved and men walk in the steps of the Crucified and are the friends of all and enemies of none, where self is forgotten and the Divine compassion moves men's hearts " to brother all the souls on earth," there is heaven now ; and when the fashion of this world shall have passed away, and faith is swallowed up in sight and hope in full fruition, then abides that love which is the eternal life of God and into which we have been gathered and in which we share.

VI

TRUTH IN ACTION

Sed si eum quem videt humano visu, spirituali charitate diligeret, videret Deum qui est ipsa charitas, visu interiori, quo videri potest. Qui ergo fratrem quem videt non diligit, Deum, qui est dilectio, qua caret qui fratrem non diligit, quomodo potest diligere? Ex una enim eademque charitate Deum proximumque diligimus; sed Deum propter Deum, nos vero et proximum propter Deum.

PETER LOMBARD.

The mystical body of Christ is so truly one, not only at any given time, but at all time, that one who is a disciple indeed is, if one may say so, all disciples in one. He has left nets with the Zebedees, and custom-houses with St. Matthew; his tears have flowed into the channel of the Magdalene's, and so have reached the sacred feet of our Lord; and his head is with St John's, on the bosom of everlasting Love; he is in all crosses and pains of saints that suffer, and partakes of all glories, and wears all crowns; for the life of Christ makes him one with all manifestations of Christ's love, both suffering and triumphant, that ever have been or ever will be. There is something communicated to the true believer which makes him understand the words, "Yesterday, to-day and for ever." Those early Fathers were not so unreasonable who spoke of the Church as existing before the sun and moon. The body of Christ is something more than a fortuitous concourse of redeemed atoms. He that hath the life hath the Son; there is nothing fortuitous, or atomic, or transitory about that.

J. RENDEL HARRIS.

THAT which we have described as the fundamental principle of the Christian Religion involves that Jesus is the meaning of life; He is that which we ought to be. By this it is not meant that we have or can have the

particular function to perform which was His or that we ever could perform it, but rather that His life as being wholly inspired by love is the example and ideal of mankind. Thus we are not called to any slavish copying of His outward way of life which was ordered with a view to His own special calling and vocation and was as natural and suitable in Palestine in the first century as it would be unnatural and bizarre in this day and in the West. But we are called to walk in the way of universal love; because so to live is, in the language of philosophy rather than of religion, to obey the inward law of our being.

I

Who is my neighbour?

In the course of our discussion we have seen on the one hand that every man is an end in himself and on the other that mankind is constituted by the nature of things a family in such wise that the individual can only find his own true good in the good of all the rest. We have shown that an individual apart from society is a mere abstraction of thought and does not exist; man's good is a common good. This conclusion is corroborated by our moral consciousness; for the acts which we have come instinctively to condemn as wrong are found on examination to be such as are selfish and

anti-social. We may lay it down then as the fundamental principle of right, that is rational, conduct, that the end of all conduct should be the good, not of any one person or class or race at the expense of others, but of all humanity. Such a principle however is far too general to be of much help to us, and we must seek to give it content; above all it is necessary that we be clear wherein lies the good of all which must be the goal of conduct. A notion of that good we shall attain through a further inquiry into the nature and meaning of personality.

We should note further at this stage, that the value of a deed depends upon its meaning, and its meaning depends upon its motive and the spirit and purpose that prompt it. The widow's mite is really worth more than the spare cash of the rich, because it means more. A kind deed done grudgingly and as a dismal duty is not really a kind deed. No deed can really be done aright that is not done for love's sake. Our problem therefore is, how will love express itself in this complex modern world, how are we to interpret into the life of to-day the spirit of Jesus? Rational or Christian conduct can never be summed up under a code of laws in any merely legal sense; it is the rational expression of love.

At the same time it must be remembered that love in the true sense, in which we are now using it, is not a mere sentiment, nor is

conduct right that is guided by sentimentalism. Love is the deliberate seeking of the good of others ; it is needful therefore to know not only wherein this good consists, but also by what means it may be attained. . Starting then from the old principle that we are to love our neighbour as ourselves, we shall ask, who is my neighbour ? It will be remembered that when this question was put to Jesus, He answered with the parable of the Good Samaritan, the meaning of which I take to be that my neighbour is the man who needs my help, no matter to what class or nation he belongs ; he is every man with whom I come in contact. In a primitive and small community where life is simple and the needs of the community are satisfied without contact with the outside world, it may be easy to know who is my neighbour. But in our day the problem is enormously more complex ; for the whole world has become a neighbourhood. Let a man consider but the clothes he wears and the meals that he consumes ; cotton from America, wool from Spain, apples from Canada, mutton from New Zealand, rice from India, eggs from Egypt, butter from Denmark, cheese from Holland, wheat from Russia, tea from China, wine from France and Germany,—from all these countries and more come contributions to the clothing and the feeding of him. I am enabled to live my life of health and happiness

and comfort with time to read books and to live a home-life and to say my prayers through the labours of others whose faces I have never seen, whose names I do not know, and often enough whose language I cannot understand; men toil underground in mines that I may sit in a warm room to write my book; women labour ceaselessly for a shameful pittance to make matchboxes that I may cheaply light my pipe; I may know my grocer and even take an interest in his family, but behind him and discernible to the eye of the imagination stands a great company of human beings, men who sow the seed and reap the field, farm-labourers living or existing, they and their families, upon a farm-labourer's wage, fruit farmers from the colonies, lonely tea-planters, patient coolies, women upon Indian fields tending the paddy beneath the burning sun, carriers and carters, white and black and yellow and brown; and I am debtor to all these; they toil for me; they are my neighbours. *L'être humaine souffre toujours solitairement dans sa chair, et c'est pourquoi la guerre est possible.*"*

But by what means can I hope to express my neighbourly feeling and gratitude to all these? Certainly not by merely paying the prices the retailer demands of me; to pay debts is but common honesty; love and gratitude demand more than this. How can my

* M. Duhamel, quoted in *The Nation*, December 28th, 1918.

love and thanks express itself? When I was a boy at home it was at one time our custom that whenever there might be fish upon the table there should be set there also a collecting box for the "Mission to the Deep Sea Fishermen," in order that there might be acknowledgment of thanks not only to God the giver of all good gifts, but also to his priests at whose hands and through whose labours and sacrifices we received the gifts. That is the right principle. These men left home and shelter to venture on the seas for me; the least I could do was to send someone to bind up their wounds in case of accident, and to speak to them a word of God in season. But how is this principle to be applied all round?

What then exactly is it that we desire to do for all these if we can? Not to take from them their hard work and toil, to save the sailor from the sea, the miner from the mine; this life is their glory, their calling of God; but we desire that all of them shall know that which will make their work seem glory and service and not drudgery, that all of them shall know the goodness and grace of God in Christ; and in order to this and involved in this we desire that they should live under such conditions as that they may have opportunity of sufficiency, leisure and education to enable them to realise their manhood and to bring up their families in the "knowledge and love of God." Man has

physical needs which must be satisfied and apart from the satisfaction of which the proper development of personality is impossible; but man cannot live by bread alone, and his deepest need is spiritual. The demand for more leisure and higher wages is the demand for fuller life; not justice but fellowship is the goal, the former as a means to the latter. But if the meaning and purpose of human life is that man should become a conscious and willing member of the family of God, it follows, that, recognised or unrecognised, his deepest need is for a true thought of God.

Mere justice is content with honourable and fair dealing between men, but love seeks more than this. Love is never satisfied with a cash nexus and mutual respect; for love seeks the real good of the other. How then under modern conditions can the purpose of love express itself?

Substantially the only means open to us of directly serving the spiritual needs of those of our neighbours who live in far away parts of the earth is through the support of foreign Missionary Societies; if this idea is not further developed here, it is because it is self-explanatory, and it is assumed that anyone who does not see that the purpose for which these Societies exist is one in which he is bound to share has somehow missed the meaning of life. There are many ways open to men of sharing their spiritual goods with their neighbours

at home; it will be enough to remark that the more direct are preferable to those performed by proxy through the payment of a small subscription.

Our second great means of service is through politics. By politics is not meant the un-edifying rivalries of political parties, though membership of a party is at present for many probably a necessary condition of service. By politics is meant the attempt on a local or national or international scale so to ameliorate social conditions as that the social order of the world shall express the brotherhood of man, as it should, instead of denying it, as it does at present.

II

Political Principles.

But let us turn to positive political principles. At once we ask, is there a distinctively Christian political philosophy? Can we identify any political party with the Christian cause? Is the state secular or is it sacred? What is the attitude of the would-be imitator of Jesus to state-machinery and state action? If the state acts upon a sub-Christian level what is the Christian to do? Is there any one Christian ideal at all? Is it not the spirit that matters, not the form of government?

We shall put ourselves upon the wrong track from the outset, if we begin by asking whether *laissez faire* or "the greatest good of the greatest number" or some other political maxim is a Christian principle or not. States are organised differently, and what in any particular state at any particular epoch is the rule by which right-minded legislators will adjust their legislation is a contingent, not a necessary rule; it must not be exalted into a first principle. We must avoid the superstition that modern states after the European model are fixed entities, part of the "natural" and right order of things as things are meant to be. We can make no such assumption *à priori* on any Christian grounds. *If there be a Christian political philosophy, we shall find it not by gazing upon the changeful and the contingent, but upon the true nature and destiny of man.* We shall ask, what is involved in the nature of personality, and shall start from our doctrine of man as he is and as he may be.

Man then is by nature a being pulled hither and thither by diverse passions and desires, selfish and yet not wholly selfish, "a gregarious animal," as the books say, made for fellowship as we may put it, and yet for ever breaking fellowship and disloyal to society. Man is capable of becoming a being swayed by reason and love and of organising himself into a mutual and perfect fellowship, in which each

individual attains to the fulness of his personality by the free and glad service of the rest. Between the first stirrings of human life upon the planet and the last consummation when the family of God is completed, there fall milleniums of time and innumerable gradations of incomplete attainment. But always because of what it is and what it may become, human personality is sacred ; every man is created in the image of God, that is to say, he is a person ; and every man is capable of becoming a child of God by faith and love. It is said of the Pharisees in the time of Christ that they would even be careful not to tread upon a scrap of paper by the way lest by chance there should be written upon it the sacred name of God ; that we properly regard as superstition ; but to trample upon a human personality, to treat a human being as a pawn in the game, as a " hand," as a means to our advancement, as an instrument of our pleasure, to treat a human being, that is, as less than a person made in the image of God, is in the highest degree profane ; and this kind of sacrilege is the only sacrilege. This reverence for the personality of every individual, which the world learns as a matter of fact from the life and teaching of Jesus, we may call, if we will, the first principle of conduct. It forms a rule by which we may test our own private conduct, social institutions and forms of government.

This principle explains the moral wrong of all the ills of society, slavery, war, sweating, prostitution, slums, strife between capital and labour; for all these involve or are connected with the use of men or women as instruments or conveniences for the pleasure or comfort or punishment of others. This principle is violated whenever we are satisfied solely with a cash nexus between ourselves and some other, whenever we seek to dominate or force some other individual in virtue of our superior strength or financial or social position, whenever we treat anyone as "only a servant" or "only a nigger," whenever we invest our money in a business, the management of which is unknown to us, whenever we treat any person with contempt or disrespect. But this principle is applicable not only to individual conduct but also to the forms and instruments of government. An illustration must suffice to explain this: a republic is, or should be, a higher and therefore more Christian form of government than an autocratic despotism, because under the latter the ordinary man is cut off from certain activities of life such that the full growth of his personality is thereby thwarted and prevented.

We may meet here the objection that if men were perfect, or, as it is sometimes put, "where you have the right spirit," it does not matter whether you have a despotism

or a republic ; Christianity is concerned with securing the right spirit, not with forms or instruments of government. This is not true, partly for the reason above, that some forms of government, however benevolent the governors, hinder the true development of the personalities of the people, and partly because the spirit, though immeasurably more important than the outward forms, must ever seek to embody itself in outward forms ; and our quest is for the forms into which the right spirit must inevitably in the end strive to embody itself.

We have laid it down as a first principle that respect and reverence is always due to the individual personality ; in philosophical language every person is to be treated as an end in himself, not as a means to an end ; as has been said, we must never think of personality as being something wholly individual and atomic. We find that even in the lowest stages of human development there is still *society* ; there is no such thing as an individual isolated and wholly independent of his fellows ; personality involves society from the beginning. Our problem may be stated thus : if there were abroad everywhere " the right spirit," if men were what they ought to be, how would society organise itself that it might express the dignity and worth of the individual and at the same time the brotherhood and willing interdependence of all ?

In outline at least we must see the ideal before we shall well know how to deal with the actual. It is here that Christian thought* at the present moment is much required. There is, happily, in the hearts of many, an excellent spirit towards "social problems," but apart from a little tinkering here and there with the social machine men do not know what to do; they lack clear principles; they are like those parodied as saying, "we do not know where we want to go to, but let us get there quickly." If we can attain to some fairly clear notion of what is the *ideal* for society, we shall have a principle whereby to decide upon the right course of action amid the perplexing demands of modern life. We shall further, so far as we conscientiously can, those schemes and measures which seem to us under the circumstances to afford the nearest feasible approximation to the ideal; and we shall be able to exert the maximum influence on political, industrial and social life by a steadfast and unswerving loyalty to the ideal which we have seen and the methods involved in that ideal.†

Before attempting to sketch the ideal

* Because Christ, as we have seen, is the meaning of life, we may as properly speak of the society in which Reason rules as the society in which Christ rules, and of the Rationalist as of the Christian. The Christian life is the rational life in the true sense. But I have preferred in this section to keep the terms Christ and Christian.

† The difficult problem of the Christian's participation in politics will be discussed in the forthcoming volume "Christ and Cæsar."

society, which, it will be remembered, is the kind of society under human limitations that the right notion of personality demands for its full expression, I should enter the warning, that we have no warrant to assume from the outset that states after the modern European model are likely to be permanent or have any special validity; the ideal may prove to be a world-state or an immense confederacy of city-states or a league of Empires or of nations. Most discussions on the function of the state and kindred subjects assume the divine and eternal right of national Parliaments; but we must for the time keep fluid our notion of the state, and that is partly why I said earlier that we shall get little help from the old catchwords such as *laissez faire*.*

Personality is such that a man requires fellowship that he may be truly himself, or at least that he may live the full life of which he is capable; if there is a community of persons wholly trusting and respecting one another the forms of their social life will in the end reflect this mutual relationship; where the doctrine of human brotherhood is really believed, men will ever seek to express brotherhood in their social and political institutions. Let us then look at a few of our social and political institutions, in the light of the ideal. A full discussion of these problems

* See further "Christ and Cæsar."

lies outside the scope of this book. All that is here attempted is to show that from our first architectonic principle of the nature and meaning of personality, we can derive political principles which will serve to guide us in the complex problems of modern civilisation.

(a) The ultimate nature of authority in the state or society is necessarily considered as fundamental. In connection with this problem it will be well to quote what seems to be the only explicit instructions extant given by Jesus to His disciples as to the organisation of their fellowship. These are the words, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors ! but ye shall not be so ; but he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief as he that doth serve."* "Be not ye called Rabbi ; for one is your Master . . . and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth : for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters : for one is your Master . . . But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."† This is a picture of the ideal society ; and in it, authority is moral, not based on force, the authority of love and persuasion and recognised gift ; the use of force whether by army or police is either not allowed or not required or both. In other words the force

* Luke xxii. 25, 26. † Matt. xxiii. 8-11.

behind authority is personal, not mechanical. As things are, human society is far enough from this goal ; but we shall only act wisely as we shall keep our eyes steadily upon the ideal which at present is scarcely recognised as such. In this sense (but not in any other) Christianity is anarchic.

(b) Let us glance now at further problems. Man is a national or tribal animal ; but he is (and as his personality develops he is increasingly) an international animal. The national or tribal element in his nature has long been organised and has found for itself forms of expression. As yet there is no expression of human solidarity comparable in adequacy to the expression of national and racial solidarity. It is a fundamental Christian political principle that the solidarity and oneness of the human race must find adequate expression in the forms of social life.

(c) The sharing of spiritual goods involves the deliberate attempt to spread true civilisation over all the world ; this duty lies especially upon those peoples who are spiritually rich ; but it involves also that the object of the spread of civilisation is the service of the backward races, not their exploitation.

(c) To take a further illustration, at the present stage of society, laws are inevitably, to a very large extent, preventive and negative ; like the Decalogue their purport is "thou shalt not," but as civilisation advances

laws become increasingly the arrangements made by society for the regulation of its affairs according to a principle of good-will. Thus the law which would prevent a motorist from driving to the public danger and punishes him if he does so, is a negative law; it merely tries to prevent breaches of brotherly action and in a perfect state it would not be necessary. But the law which we style "the rule of the road," is an arrangement for public convenience; it is not less brotherly to keep to the right as they do in France! The ideal of law then is not the prevention of crime but the expression of brotherhood. At the present stage law has to repress anti-social action, but it must ever aim at the provision of channels for fellowship and social service.

(d) Again, even amongst the explicit theories of punishment which are more humane, there is a clash between the true interests of the criminal and considerations of public convenience. To the Christian the good of one *person*, that is, the criminal, is of far higher value than any amount of *things* that is, "property."

(e) Yet another illustration, the Christian theory of education must be that its end is to bring out or educe the capabilities of the personality. The Christian therefore will stand firm against all rival theories, implicit and explicit, as that the end of education is to train men to take their part in the economic

battle of life or to subserve the interests of mere class or nation. The spiritual end of education must dominate both institution and curriculum.

(f) Again, the modern world is involved in intricate controversies concerning the organisation of industry and commerce, in problems of capitalism and trade-unionism, of free trade and tariff reform; in this welter of theories and interests is there a Christian principle by which we may guide our action? Certainly there is. Industry and commerce must be organised with an eye to the value of personality and the requirements of brotherhood and love rather than to any financial or hedonistic values. For instance, "Protection" as an *ideal* is essentially un-Christian, because it denies the glory of human brotherhood and willing interdependence and mutual service.

(g) Further, the present organisation of society under which wealth and those good and spiritual things to which money is now the key, are in the hands of the very few, and the majority must live under conditions degrading to personality, that is, with insufficient food, insufficient leisure, bad housing, over-crowding, and defective education, and under a public opinion which values persons, not according to a man's intrinsic worth, but according to the conventional respectability of his vocation or social

status, together with the ignorance, disease and vice which largely spring from these causes, conditions each of which is the negation of brotherhood, and which together make impossible the life of glad and free service of God and man—this organisation of society is for the Christian utterly *intolerable*; and the first condition of remedy is that we realise how intolerable it is.

“(h) Christianity does not involve the abolition of private property, and this for two reasons, first because the development of personality requires that a man shall have certain possessions (as money for instance) in the wise and unselfish use of which he may grow into goodness, and second because personality requires for its full development some sphere where it may express itself (as in a home). We can tell the character of people by their homes, their furniture, their books, their treasures; they could not be quite themselves without their home, and their home is one of their most priceless contributions to the common wealth. But there is a corresponding and corrective principle which was well expressed by William Tyndale centuries gone by, “If my neighbour need; and I give him not, neither depart liberally with him of that which I have, then withhold I from him unrighteously that which is his own . . . In those goods which are gotten most truly and justly are men much

beguiled, for they suppose they do no man wrong in keeping them."

It is not thought or suggested here that all our problems become simple in the light of our ideal; they are amazingly complex; Christian men may well differ as to the best course of action at any particular time; they will often have to support proposals which they recognise to be very far from ideal, but they will not be liable to censure for "compromising with the world," if they are able to declare that their support is given on the ground that this or that proposal is of all feasible proposals the one that offers the highest value to personality and the nearest approximation to the ideal.

III

Via lucis via crucis.

When we turn from politics to problems of individual conduct, our way is still not plain; true, we can lay down general principles as that man must walk by love, must treat persons with respect and seek the good of humanity; but in the concrete application of the principles our difficulties arise. We are faced with very different interpretations of what love involves. Where the doctors disagree, how can we be wise? How are we to know what action really is for our neighbour's highest good? What if in serving one neighbour we neglect

another ? These problems might be multiplied indefinitely, and no rules can be laid down, the application of which will be quite simple. But we need not for this reason despair. These difficulties are inevitable from the nature of things. For our judgments in morals are in this like our judgments in art ; they depend upon the stage of insight and culture to which we have attained. Like the æsthetic, the moral sense has developed through the course of history ; if the savage prefers the tom-tom to Händel, we are not surprised nor shaken in our own conviction ; if God-fearing men of three generations ago saw no evil in slavery which to us seems immoral, we are not perturbed if we believe that mankind attains gradually to knowledge in morality as in other things. But this does not imply that we can take with satisfaction our own natural instinctive moral judgments ; it is our duty to develop our personality on its moral as on every other side ; we must cultivate a tender conscience ; we must try to see ever more clearly what love means, and while we cannot take in a literal and slavish sense the words of Jesus and wresting them from their context apply them to the world of our day, we can and must expect "new light to break forth from his holy word." Paul once thought that "verily he ought to do many things contrary to this

Name"; but he had an open mind and a tender conscience, and when he saw more light, then in spite of any consequences and any inconsistency he "was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."

"In all these matters of conduct we need to take the widest view that we can, to consult those who have thought through these things before us, but above all we must not offend against love. There is an old saying that it is possible to hold the Catholic faith in an heretical spirit and to hold an heretical faith in the catholic spirit; there is no doubt which is better. If we cannot but offend against a wisdom to which we have not attained, we need not offend against love.

The only hope of progress in insight is that individuals shall from time to time see more deeply into the meaning of love than their fellows, and that they shall be loyal to what they see. A young artist who claims to know better than the Masters does not cut a very impressive figure; but in art there can be no progress unless someone does advance upon those that went before and is not disobedient to his vision. So in morals, to stand alone against the world for conscience' sake is no easy thing, but to fail to do so, should occasion arise, is not only to do violence to one's own spiritual nature, but to play traitor to humanity.

"If Jesus Christ is the meaning of life, then

the right life is to stand for the things that He stood for and to take the consequences. That is the principle, and it is for each to follow out its implications as he may be able to see them. What Christ stood for is plain ; it was for a love that knows no barrier of class or race or moral attainment, and that will take no refusal. In the hearts of those who have awakened to see that He is life's meaning and who have responded to it, that same shepherd-instinct is repeated. This love is no cold sense of obligation, but a "cordialising " with all our fellow men, with the man who is contented with the outward show of things, as with the man whose soul is athirst for truth, with the unlovely and the degraded as with the refined and the attractive ; for upon all these lies a veil that keeps them from reality ; and it is truth that makes man free and makes man whole.

Again, it is important to remember that the method of love cannot be separated from its purpose. How shall men be awakened to truth and to reality ? The narrative of the Temptation at the beginning of Christ's ministry makes plain both that He conceived Himself to have a world-wide mission and that He rejected all external and unspiritual methods to attain His end. That must be so from the nature of things. A man may be forcibly awakened from sleep, but he cannot be compelled to appreciate the beauties of the

surprise. For Christ to have sought allegiance by force or the display of miracles would have been to deny His nature and His purpose. How willingly would the people have followed Him if only He would have led them against the Romans or to rescue John the Baptist from his prison, but he could not ; therefore it was that men preferred Barabbas. Jesus had selected from the armoury of God the only weapon adequate to His need, the spirit of self-forgetful love.

From the nature of the case this method is binding upon His followers ; but the implications of this are not always seen. Theologians have sometimes sought to win assent to Christianity by laying stress upon the alleged miraculous elements in the Gospels. These stories may be true or false, but the end of religion can only be attained when men see its meaning, not in outward happening, but in what Jesus was in Himself. Again, if we consider the manner in which disputes are often carried on between political parties or religious denominations or public controversialists and, still more, by nations in their dealings with one another, it is easy to see that even when ideals are high men may forget that the means may stultify the end. But the principle is clear that the Christian stands for the things for which Christ stands and therefore for His method, though the consequences be, for

disciple as for Master "the royal way of the sacred Cross."*

The teaching of Jesus is not to be taken literally, and it is good to be delivered from literalism; but it should in honesty be said that His teaching is by mankind as a whole, and not least by His professed followers, not even taken seriously. For that teaching involves on any showing a complete change in the values by which men live. Jesus said that blessedness or true happiness is the lot of those who are poor, that is, those who do not set their hearts on the things that money buys; of those who mourn, that is, those who cannot be at home in a world where love is not loved; of the meek, that is, those who never stand upon their dignity nor rights; of those who hunger and thirst after the right way of life for themselves and for others; of the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted for righteousness sake. Jesus stands for those things which "the wisdom of this world" counts unpractical. Men gain their cheap and transient victories by strife and by intrigue, by compromise and expediency, by hating in response to hate; He alone believed in love and love alone; He knew

* For the implications of this principle in respect of a possible clash of "loyalties" to Church and State and for a further discussion of other political-religious questions raised in this chapter the reader is again referred to the forthcoming volume, "Christ and Cæsar," by the Rev. Herbert Morgan and the present writer.

that even in this world love wields more power than hate, that though men should seem to triumph over Him, yet in the end He would triumph over them, for making them captive by His love He would reign from His Cross for ever.

O King of earth ! the Cross ascend ;
 O'er climes and ages 'tis Thy throne ;
 Where'er Thy failing eye may bend,
 The desert blooms, and is Thine own."

For "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

In other words the Christian looks upon Jesus not only as an ideal to be admired but also as an example to be copied. The teaching of Jesus is not Utopian, which means impossible of achievement in this world, but is the transcript of that life which He actually lived and to which His followers are called. But it must be added, that it is not possible for a man to live this life unless he have caught the very spirit of Jesus, that is, unless he have awakened to see what life is and who God is. The man who has entered into this experience is separated from the world, not as the Pharisee was separated who would not defile himself by contact or communication with those whom he regarded as unclean, but because he has passed through an experience which has changed all the values of life for him ; things hitherto unimportant have

become of first importance, things for which the majority is superlatively concerned are quite indifferent to him ; in Christ all things are new.

" O Child ! Thy silence speaks,
And bids us not refuse
To bear what flesh would shun,
To spurn what flesh would choose."

Summed up in a very little phrase our supreme duty and our highest service to mankind is that we should be like Jesus ; nothing else matters in comparison with this. To be like Him means first to have awakened to His sense of God as the Father and of all His gracious purposes of love ; then to share in His unfettered love, to be dead to self, to let Jesus live over again in us, which is what Paul meant when he said that to him to live was Christ. Arguments may be resisted or ignored, but there is no argument against love. When in the hour of weakness these arguments of the fore-going chapters shall fail to convince even him who wrote them, then he will fall back upon the love and faith of those who by living, not by arguing, have made spiritual things real to him and have assured him that God is good beyond all knowing.

EPILOGUE

DEAR E.

I think that you and some others who will read my book may put it down with some little perplexity. You have read my arguments, and, I hope, assented to them, but to what does it all come in the end, you ask, and what does it mean for personal religion? So I write you this letter as some sort of epilogue.

I hope that what our fathers called "the Marrow of Divinity" is implicit in my book, but it would take another volume to work out what in these foregoing arguments is involved for religion and for theology. I will try, however, in a sentence or two to give you the gist of the whole matter.

There can be no true religion that is not based on absolute truthfulness and personal conviction. If we believe in Jesus, it must be not because of any external authority, however imposing, nor any emotion, however overwhelming, but because we see that He is true and in Him is no falsehood at all. But remember that the truth we seek is to be found not in abstract speculation, but in life. We would know the truth about God, about ourselves, and about the world. Jesus is the key to all this, but to understand Him

we need, not speculative ability, but moral sincerity and an open heart that will cleave to that which is seen to be true and good. So do not be distressed that you cannot follow all arguments nor read all philosophies, but trust the instincts of a pure and humble heart that seeks the truth, and you shall not miss life's meaning.


Truly the world still lies in darkness, and the veil yet hangs over the eyes of men, because they have false and unworthy thoughts of God. But in the hour when we awake to see that God is like Jesus, seeking our love and offering to us His love and His friendship through all life's story, and when we yield ourselves to love's demand, we thereby enter a new world, or rather we see for the first time the meaning of this world, our spirits are come home to God our Saviour, and we are at leisure to pass on the reconciling word to others.

As you may be able, help to deliver Christianity from the jargon of theology and dead metaphysics; learn to know it and to speak of it in terms of home and fatherhood and brotherhood. If Christ be lifted up, surely He will draw all men unto Him; for He is the Desire of the nations, the only satisfaction of man's heart; there is no gainsaying Him and those who live under the power of His spirit,

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